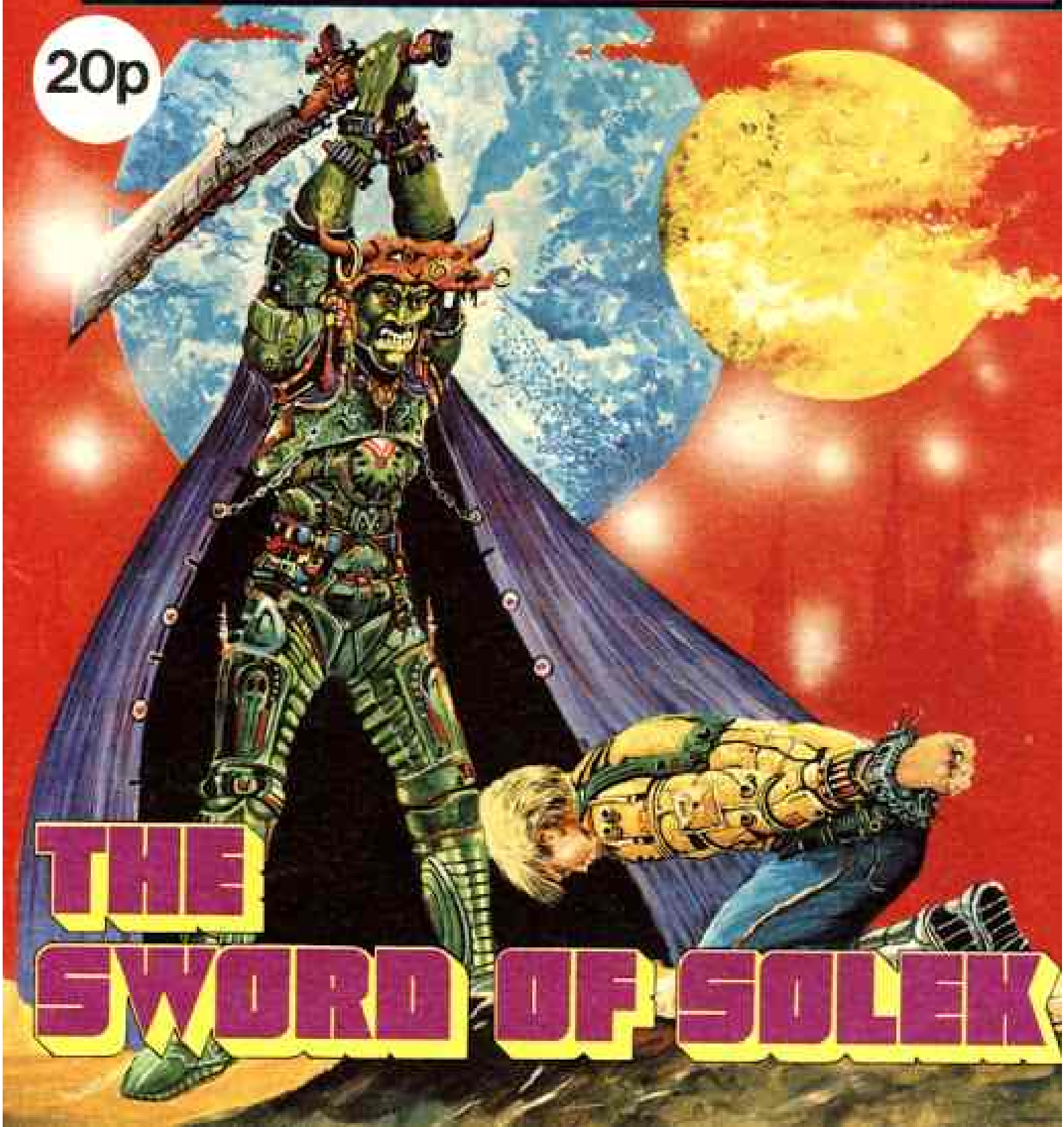
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 109

20p



THE SWORD OF SOLEX

WAR IN SPACE HAD NO RULES: YOU DESTROYED THE ENEMY ANY WAY YOU COULD. IF YOU COULDN'T WIN, YOU MADE SURE THEY DIDN'T EITHER. IT WAS A WAR ON TWO FRONTS — IF THE ENEMY DIDN'T GET YOU, THEN THERE WAS THE HOSTILE VASTNESS OF SPACE ITSELF.

A SPECIAL BREED OF FIGHTING MEN WERE NEEDED — MEN WHO COMBINED THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING WITH THE RAW COURAGE OF A SOLDIER — THEY WERE THE FIGHTING-SCIENTISTS, THE MEN FROM FI-SCI.

The SWORD of SOLEK
A LARGE GALAC-SQUAD STAR-CRUISER WAS ON PATROL, DEEP IN THE CLIODNA STAR SYSTEM.
SCANNER PROFILE MATCHES THE KNOWN PROFILE OF ENEMY UNITS. GALAC-SQUAD HAS GOT ITSELF A FIGHT! SOUND BATTLE STATIONS.

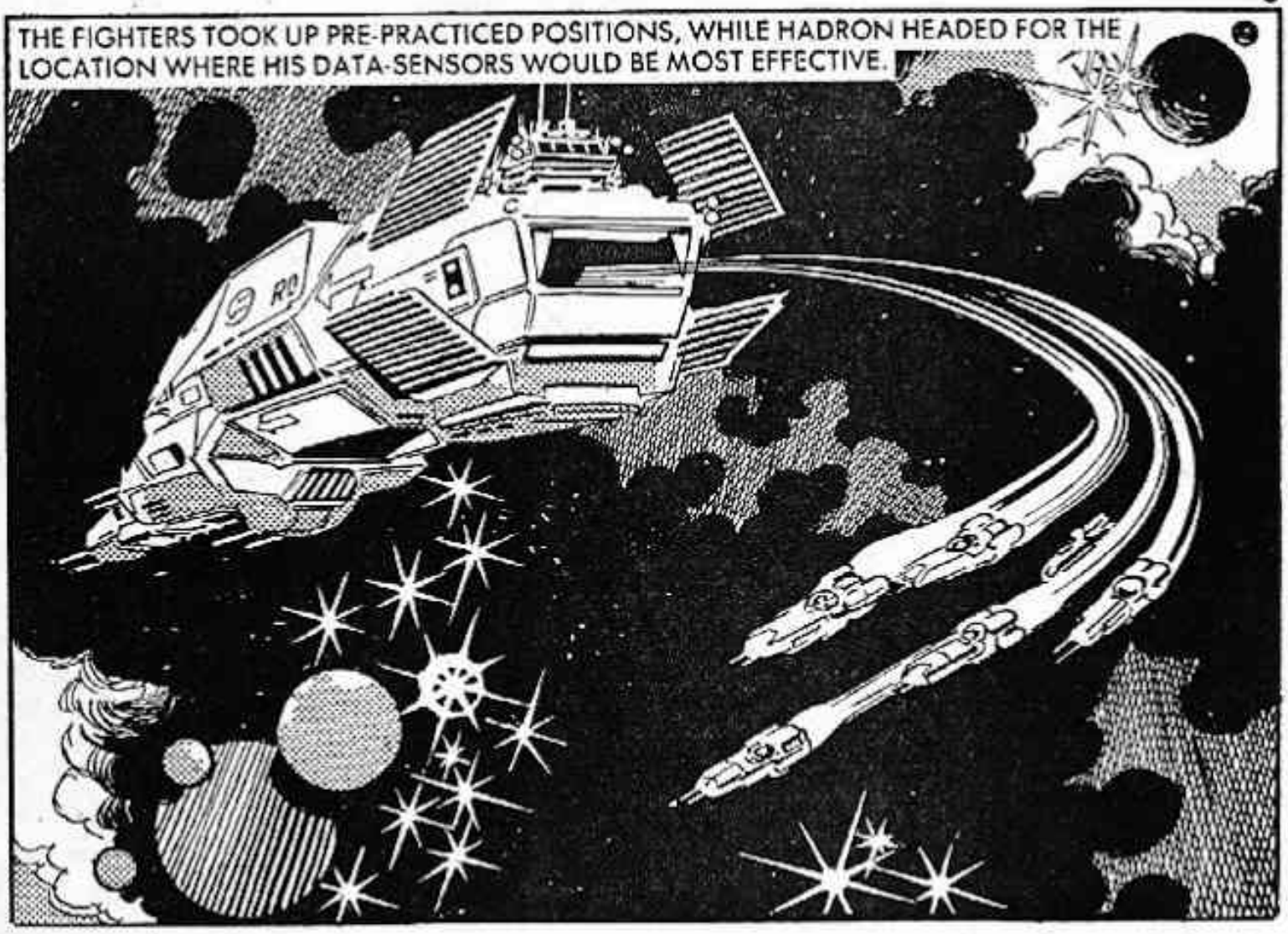
THE CALL TO BATTLE STATIONS BROUGHT THE CREW TUMBLING FROM THEIR SUSPA-BUNKS.

FIGHTER CREWS FOLLOW ME!

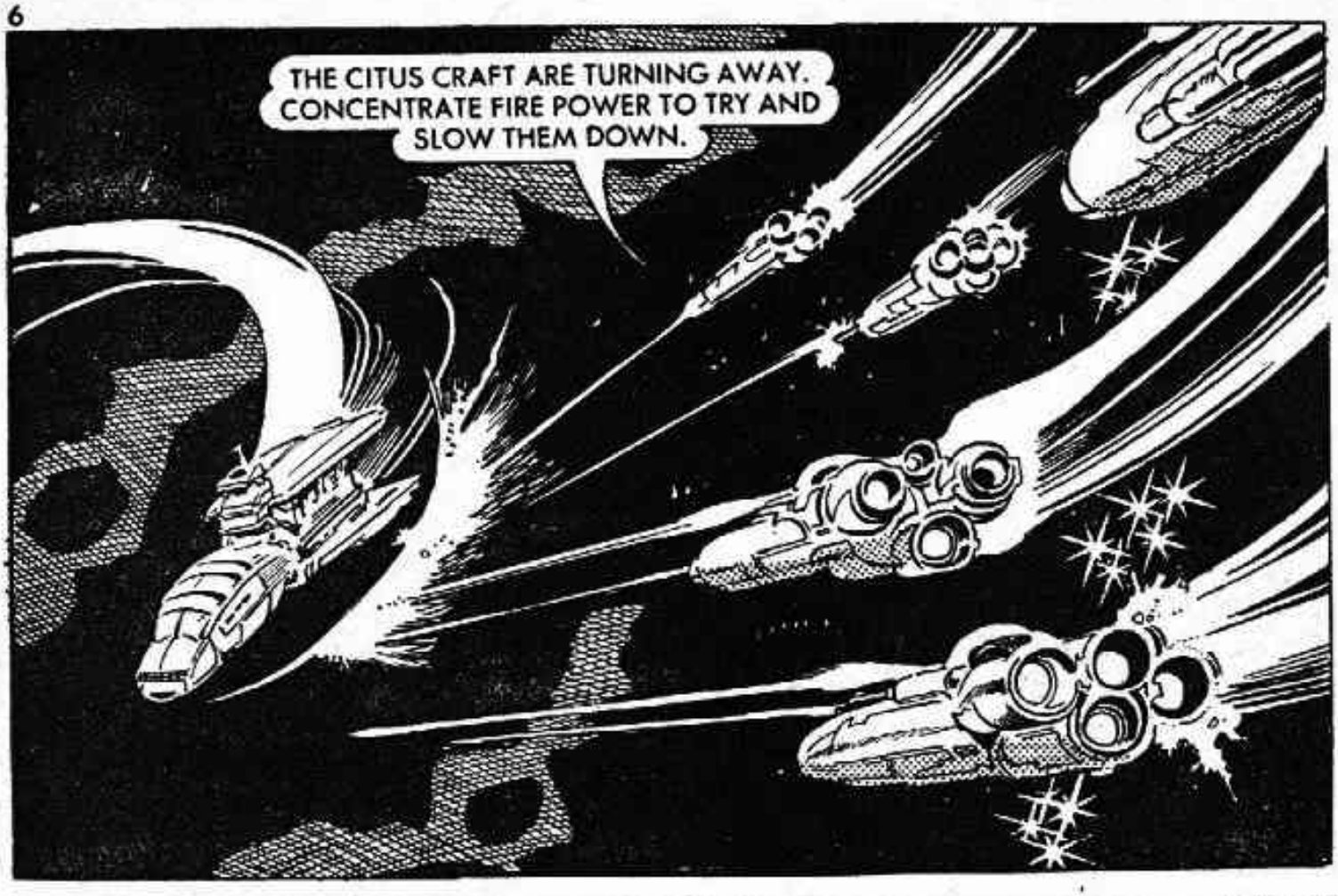
HADRON HALLEY, FIGHTING-SCIENTIST, ALSO RESPONDED TO THE ALERT.

THIS HIT AND RUN WAR AGAINST THE CITUS HAS DRAGGED ON FOR A LONG TIME — I WONDER IF IT'LL EVER END.

THE CITUS WERE GALACTIC GUERILLAS WHO WERE BENT ON THE DOWNFALL OF CENTRAL FEDERATION GOVERNMENT.


THE FIGHTERS TOOK UP PRE-PRACTICED POSITIONS, WHILE HADRON HEADED FOR THE LOCATION WHERE HIS DATA-SENSORS WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE.
RO

GALAC-SQUAD HAVE LOST A FEW SHIPS RECENTLY, AND WHATEVER DESTROYED THEM GOT PAST THEIR STANDARD DEFENCE SCREENS. IT'S TIME TO TRY SOME NON-STANDARD FI-SCI TYPE SCREENING.


THE CITUS CRAFT ARE TURNING AWAY. CONCENTRATE FIRE POWER TO TRY AND SLOW THEM DOWN.

ON BOARD THE ENEMY SHIP, GRAND-MARSHALL OTTODRUZE WATCHED AND WAITED —
ACTIVATE SYSTEM A.

MEANWHILE, HADRON LOOKED FOR DATA TO EXPLAIN THE UNCHARACTERISTIC TURN-AWAY OF THE ENEMY.
THIS INFRA-FILTER SHOULD KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING ABNORMAL . . .

JUPE . . . AN ENERGY MASS — AND ON AN IMPACT VECTOR WITH THE STAR-CRUISER!

HADRON FLASHED AN URGENT WARNING TO THE STAR-CRUISER COMMANDER.
WE'LL ALTER COURSE TWO SEGMENTS: THERE'S NOTHING ON OUR SCREENS BUT THESE FI-SCI BOYS ARE SELDOM WRONG.

THE WARNING AND THE COURSE CORRECTION CAME TOO LATE . . .
JUPE! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE SHIP?

I CAN SEE NOTHING OUT THERE YET THE WHOLE BOW SECTION IS DISINTEGRATING!

MULTIPLE PERFORATIONS IN THE PRESSURISED HULL CAUSED THE NOSE OF THE SHIP TO BLOW.

HADRON HAD NO TIME TO MOURN — HE NEEDED TO LIVE TO TELL THE TALE AND HIS SURVIVAL DEPENDED ON FAST ACTION.
THE DEBRIS FROM THE EXPLOSION IS HEADING STRAIGHT FOR ME, IF I DON'T OUT-RUN IT I'LL BE PEPPERED!

HADRON MATCHED SPEEDS WITH THE DEBRIS AND RODE THE STORM.

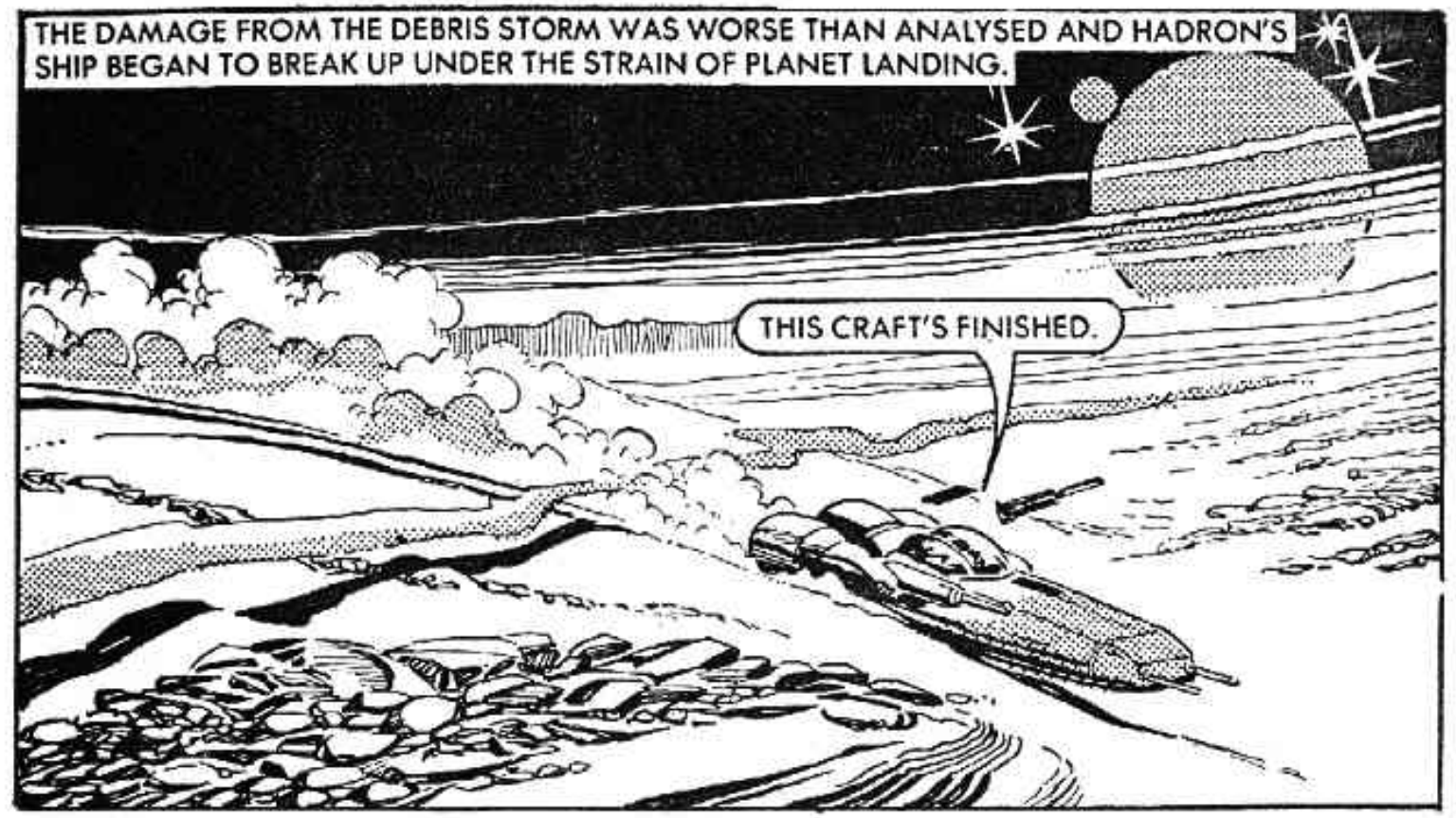
DAMAGE SUSTAINED.

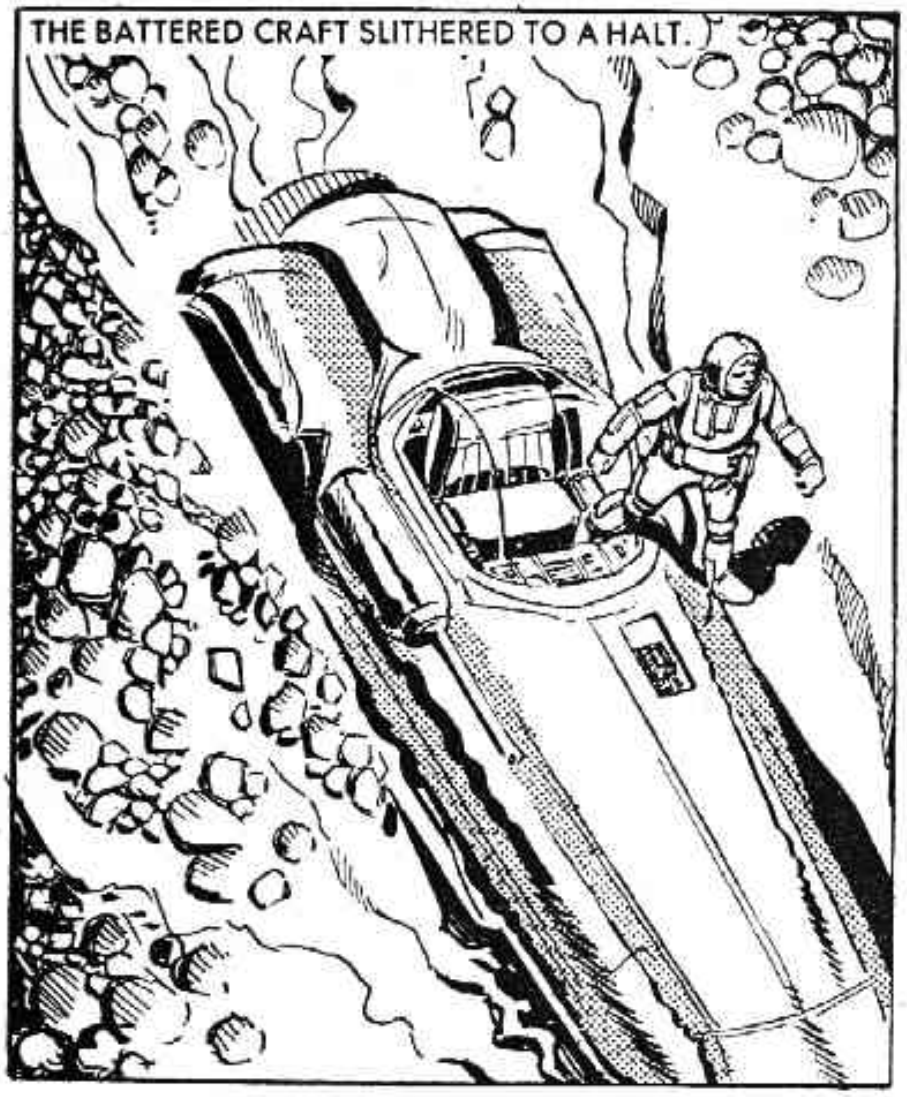
EVENTUALLY THE DEBRIS STORM DISSIPATED.
THAT'S THE IMMEDIATE DANGER OVERCOME. NOW TO SEE WHAT THE SHIP'S COMPUTER SAYS ABOUT THE LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL.

SITUATION ANALYSIS: NO HYPER-DRIVE, NO TACHYON TRANSMIT, NO GALAC-SQUAD BASE WITHIN REAL-SPACE RANGE. OPTION CHECK: PLANET WITHIN RANGE, ENVIRONMENT WITHIN HUMAN TOLERATION LIMITS OTHERWISE UNSURVEYED.
ACT ON THAT OPTION.

THE SHIP'S COMPUTER HANDLED THE PILOTING, GIVING TIME FOR HADRON TO STUDY THE DATA TAPES FROM THE FINAL MOMENTS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GALAC-SQUAD STAR-CRUISER.
IT WAS HEXOGEN WHICH DESTROYED THE STAR-CRUISER. ALL STOCKS WERE DESTROYED BY TREATY YEARS AGO, BUT SOMEWHERE THE ENEMY HAS FOUND A SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

I MUST GET THE INFORMATION OF HEXOGEN BACK TO STARBASE ONE, BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO CONCENTRATE ON SURVIVAL.


THE DAMAGE FROM THE DEBRIS STORM WAS WORSE THAN ANALYSED AND HADRON'S SHIP BEGAN TO BREAK UP UNDER THE STRAIN OF PLANET LANDING.
THIS CRAFT'S FINISHED.


THE BATTERED CRAFT SLITHERED TO A HALT.

WELL—I'M WELL AND TRULY ON MY OWN!

NO LUCK AS FAR AS NEARBY CIVILISATION GOES. I'LL WAIT FOR THE COOL OF NIGHTFALL, THEN TRY TO REACH THOSE HILLS ON THE HORIZON. THERE MIGHT BE WATER.

THE SCORCHING HEAT SAPPED HADRON'S STRENGTH —
I DOUBT IF I'LL LAST UNTIL NIGHTFALL.

HADRON GREW STEADILY WEAKER —
IS THIS HOW IT ENDS? I'VE SURVIVED DEATH-RAYS, ALIEN ATTACKS, NOVE-EXPLOSIONS . . . DID I WIN THROUGH ALL THAT ONLY TO DIE OF THIRST?

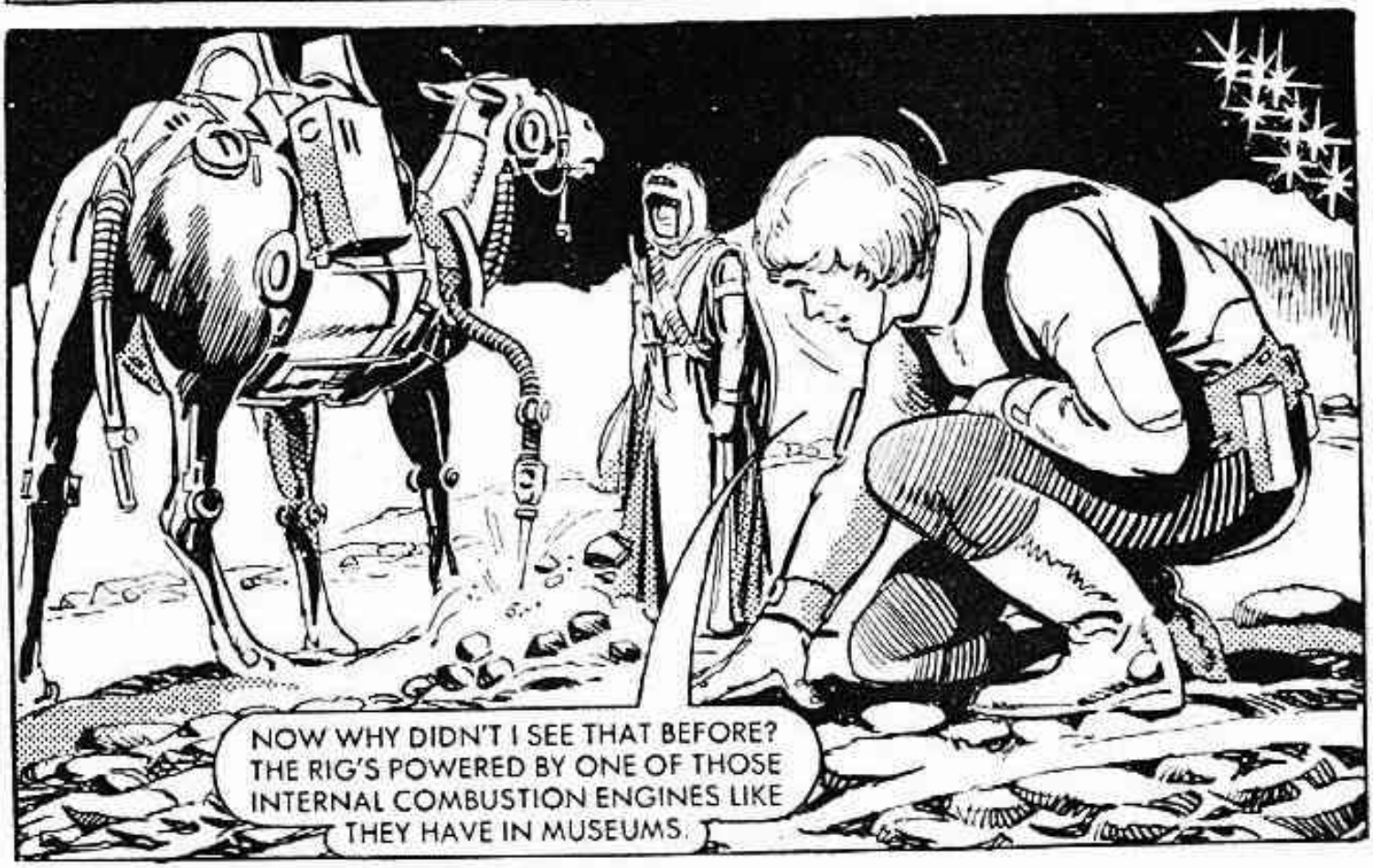
A NOISE ATTRACTED HIS ATTENTION —
JUPE'S NOVAS! I'M HALLUCINATING! DEHYDRATION IS ERODING MY BRAIN CELLS!

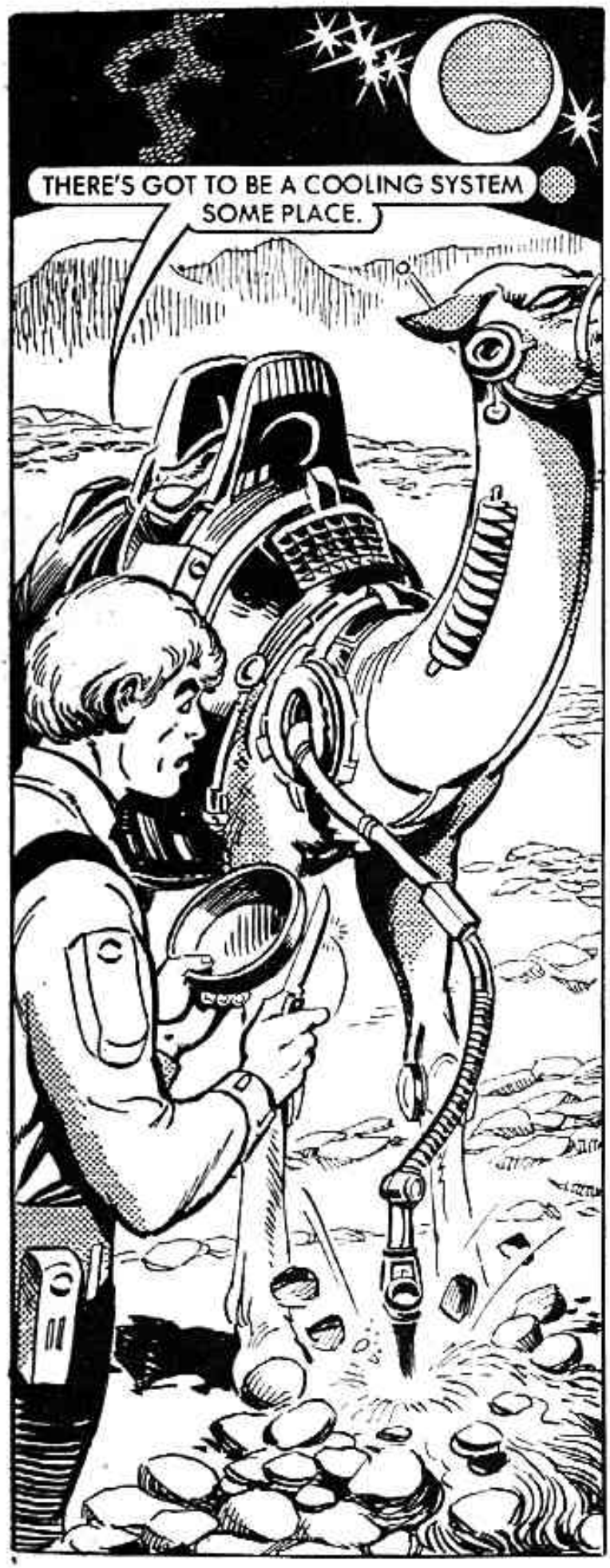
BUT HADRON WASN'T HALLUCINATING. WHAT HE SAW WAS AN AUTOPROSPECTOR, MANNED BY A ROBOT, DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE SCORCHING DESERTS —

BUT WHEN HE DRANK —
IT'S HYDRO-CARBON BASED FUEL — MUST BE WHAT IT USES IN ITS FUELLING SYSTEM.

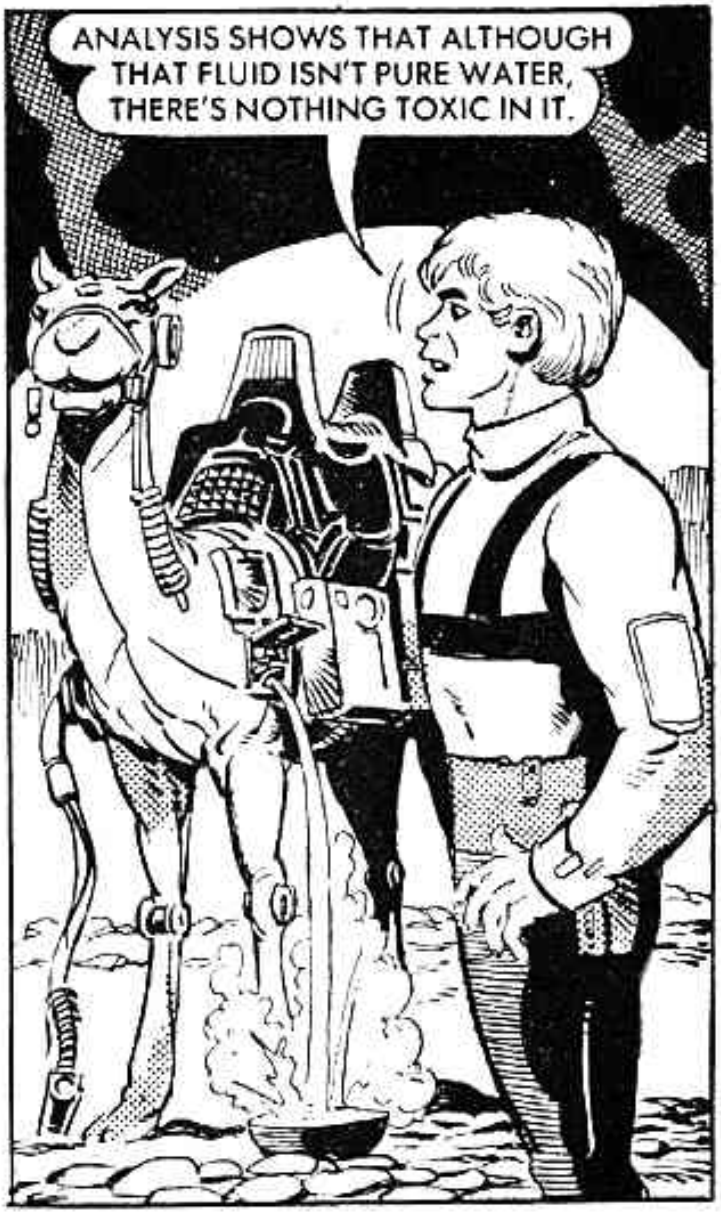
OOOF! I HOPE IT ISN'T TOO TOXIC!

PROSPECTING RIG BEGAN ITS SURVEY PROCEDURE WITHOUT ANY MOVE TOWARDS HELPING HADRON AS HE GASPED FOR AIR TO COOL HIS SEARED THROAT.

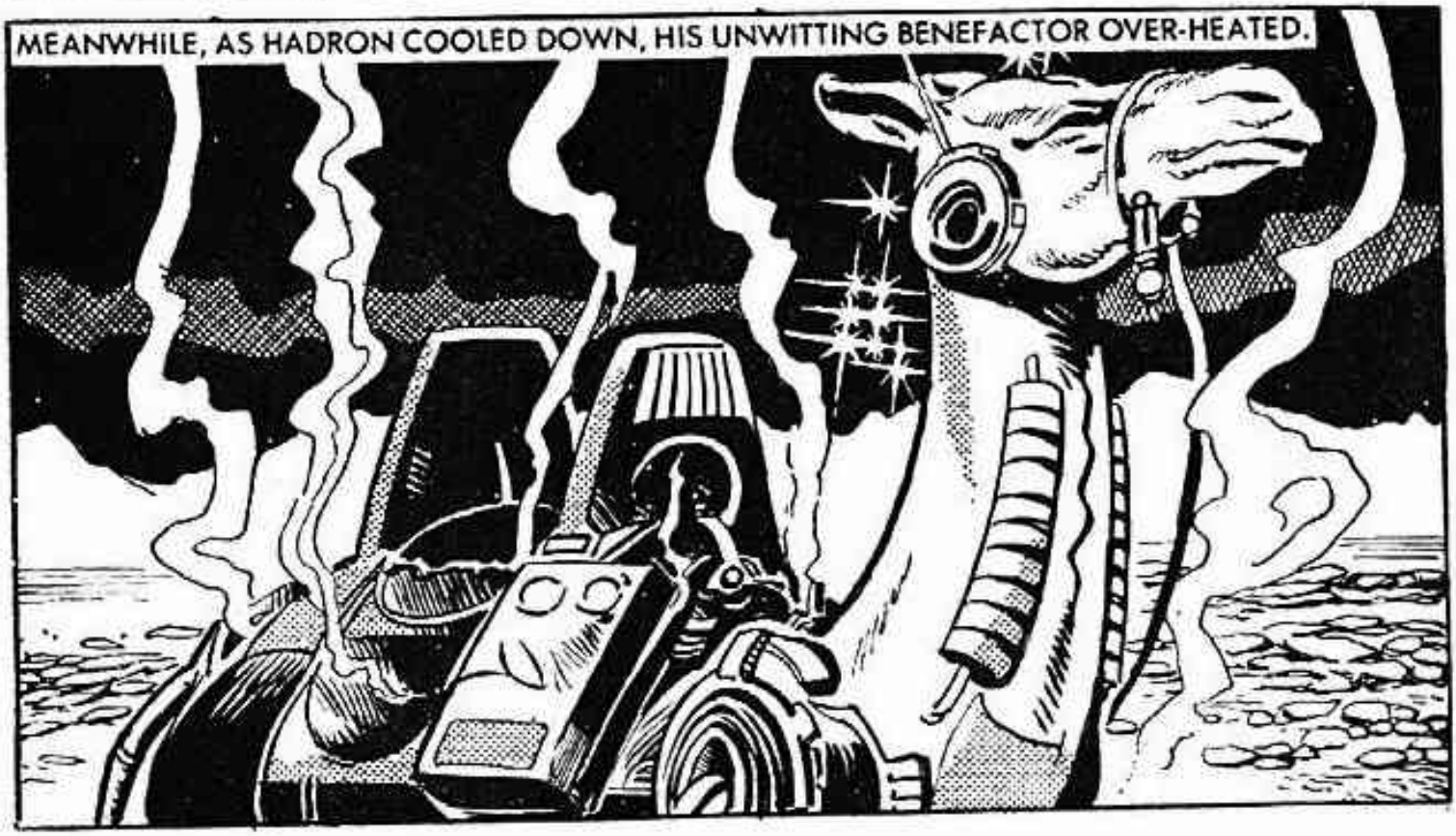

NOW WHY DIDN'T I SEE THAT BEFORE? THE RIG'S POWERED BY ONE OF THOSE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINES LIKE THEY HAVE IN MUSEUMS.


THERE'S GOT TO BE A COOLING SYSTEM SOME PLACE.

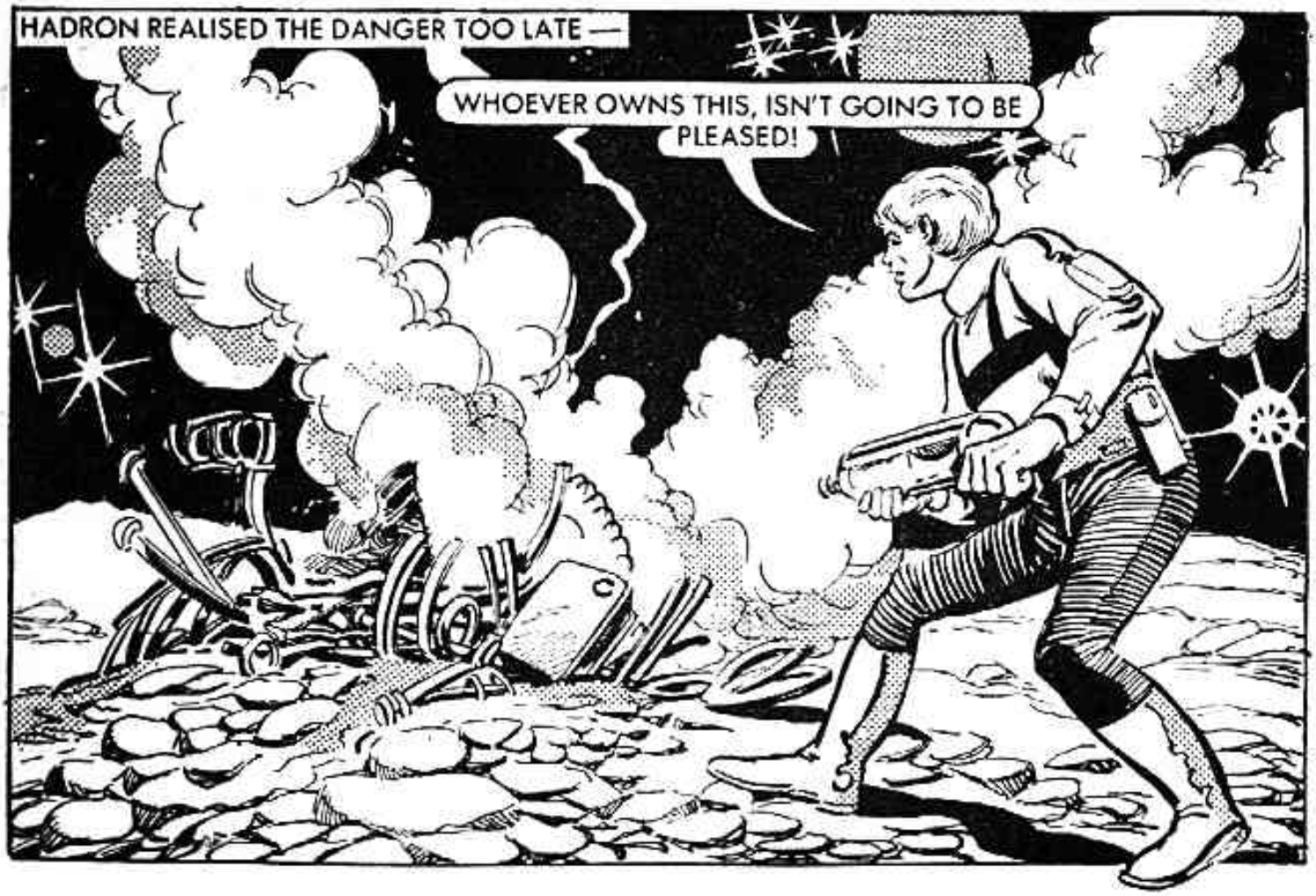
HADRON SLIT A TUBE IN THE STRANGE ROBOT'S INTERIOR —


ANALYSIS SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH THAT FLUID ISN'T PURE WATER, THERE'S NOTHING TOXIC IN IT.

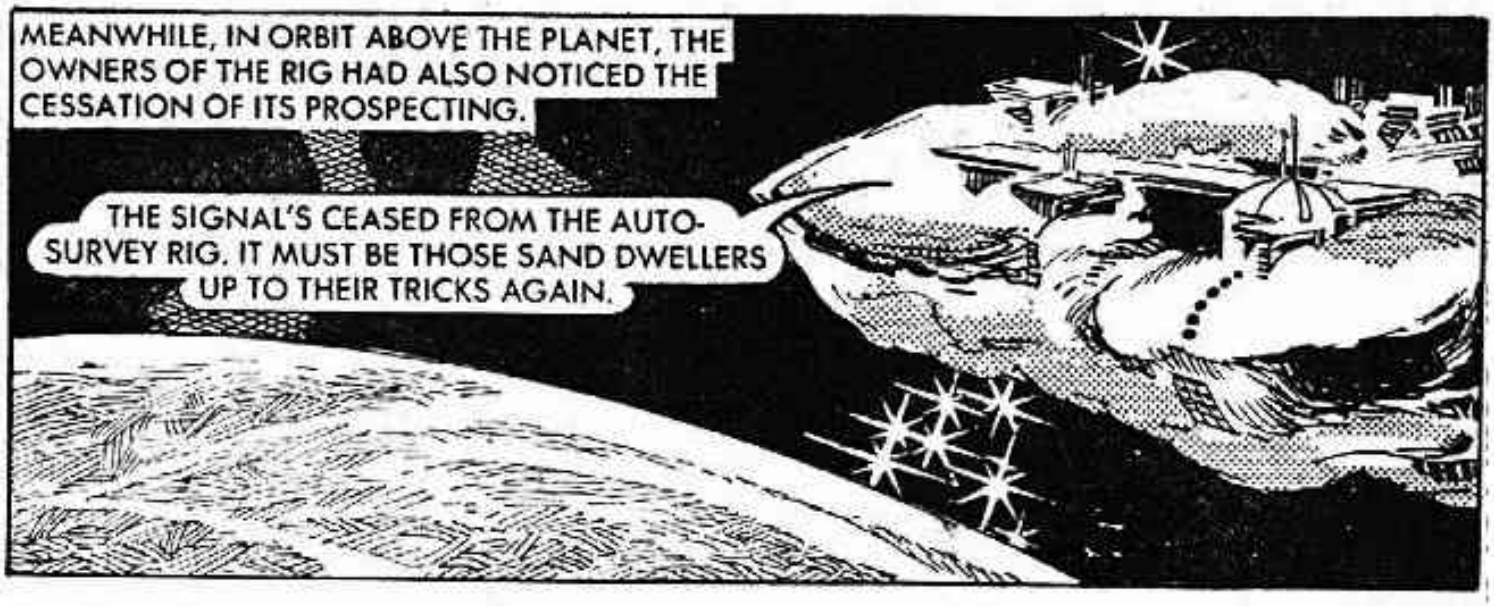
HADRON DRANK THE FLUID ONCE IT WAS COOL ENOUGH —
THAT'S BETTER!


MEANWHILE, AS HADRON COOLED DOWN, HIS UNWITTING BENEFACTOR OVER-HEATED.

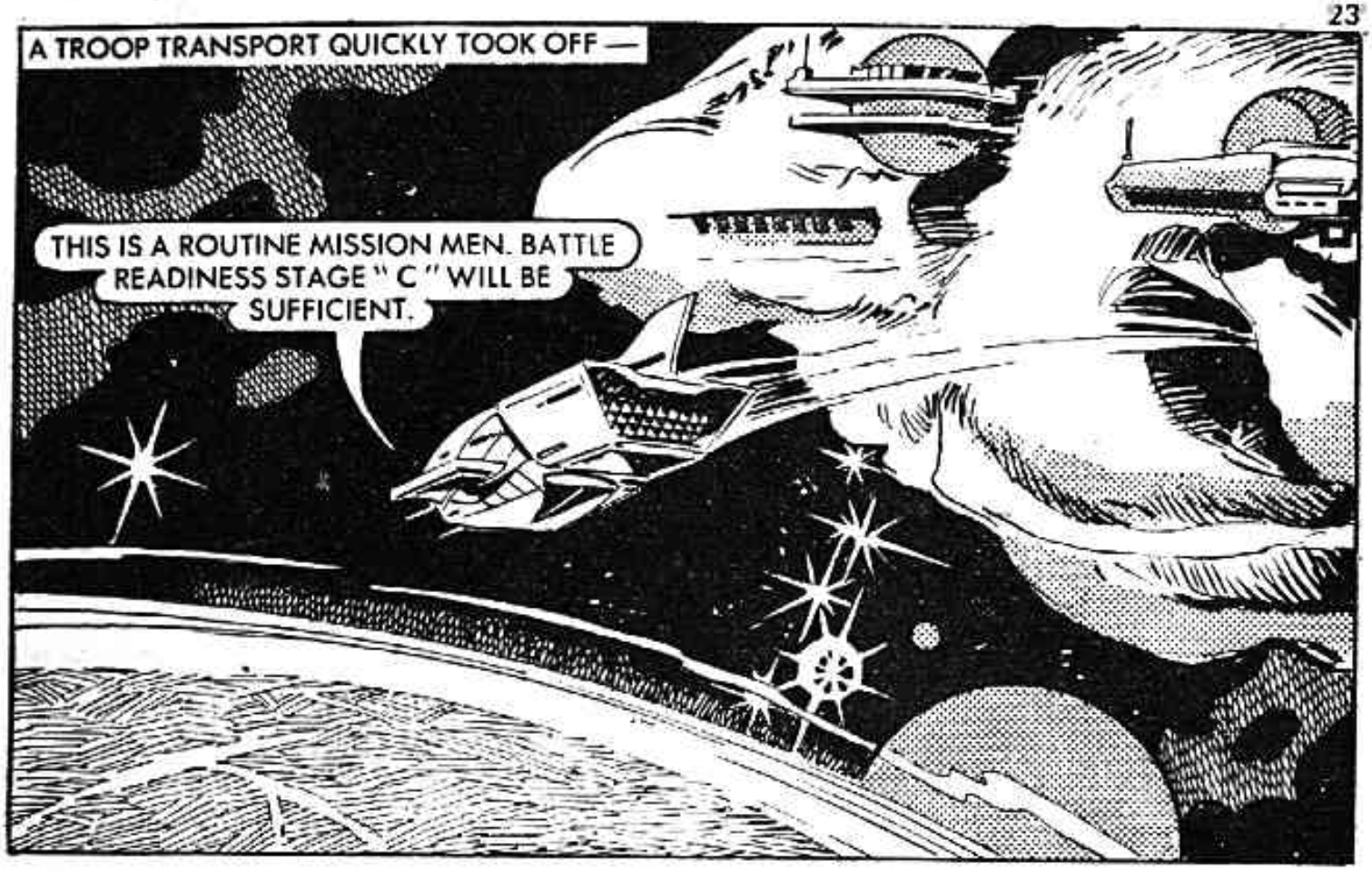
THE SYSTEM REACHED CRITICAL POINT, OVERHEATED AND DISINTEGRATED.
THE CREWMAN, NOW WITH NO TRANSPORT, RESORTED TO A PRE-PROGRAMMED RESPONSE, WHICH WAS TO RETURN TO BASE.


HADRON REALISED THE DANGER TOO LATE —
WHOEVER OWNS THIS, ISN'T GOING TO BE PLEASED!

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RIG BROUGHT HADRON'S PRESENCE TO THE NOTICE OF THE NATIVE SAND DWELLERS —
THE DESPOILERS MUST BE AT WORK AGAIN. I MUST GET NEWS TO THE CITY FATHER.


MEANWHILE, IN ORBIT ABOVE THE PLANET, THE OWNERS OF THE RIG HAD ALSO NOTICED THE CESSATION OF ITS PROSPECTING.
THE SIGNAL'S CEASED FROM THE AUTO-SURVEY RIG. IT MUST BE THOSE SAND DWELLERS UP TO THEIR TRICKS AGAIN.

GRAND MARSHALL OTTODRUZE WAS NOT A PATIENT MAN —
A SHUTTLE LOAD OF OUR STORM TROOPS SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO WARN THOSE NATIVES AWAY FROM TAMPERING WITH OUR OPERATIONS. THE DUTY-OFFICER CAN TAKE COMMAND.

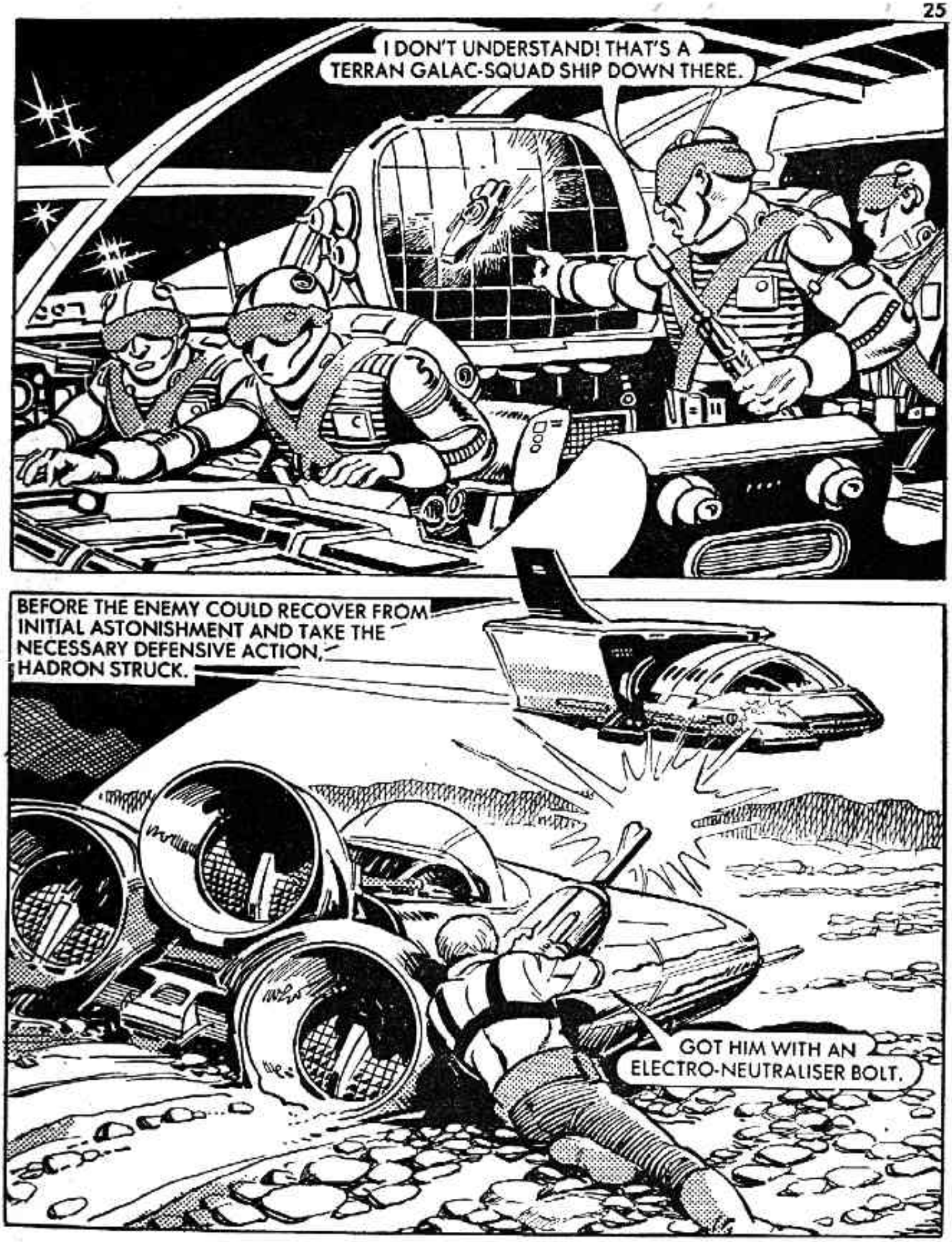

A TROOP TRANSPORT QUICKLY TOOK OFF —
THIS IS A ROUTINE MISSION MEN. BATTLE READINESS STAGE " C " WILL BE SUFFICIENT.

IN ADDITION TO THE SHUTTLE-CRAFT, A WAR PARTY OF NATIVES IN FULL BATTLE READINESS HEADED AT SPEED FROM THEIR UNDERGROUND CITY TOWARDS THE PILLAR OF BLACK SMOKE.
DEATH TO THE DESPOILERS!

HADRON'S HALF-CRIPPLED SHIP RESPONDED TO THE ATTENTION SHOWN WITH ITS GROUND SCANNERS.

BY THE SOUND OF THAT BUZZER, THAT AUTO-SCAN'S PICKED UP AN APPROACHING SHIP. IF I CAN GET A VISUAL I'LL KNOW WHAT I'M UP AGAINST.

JUPE! THAT'S AN ENEMY SHIP. SOME OF MY ARMOURY SURVIVED THE CRASH SO AT LEAST IT CAN PUT UP SOME SORT OF FIGHT.


I DON'T UNDERSTAND! THAT'S A TERRAN GALAC-SQUAD SHIP DOWN THERE.
BEFORE THE ENEMY COULD RECOVER FROM INITIAL ASTONISHMENT AND TAKE THE NECESSARY DEFENSIVE ACTION, HADRON STRUCK.
GOT HIM WITH AN ELECTRO-NEUTRALISER BOLT.

THEY'LL BE GROUNDED WITHOUT POWER LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO WIN POSSESSION OF THE SHUTTLE.

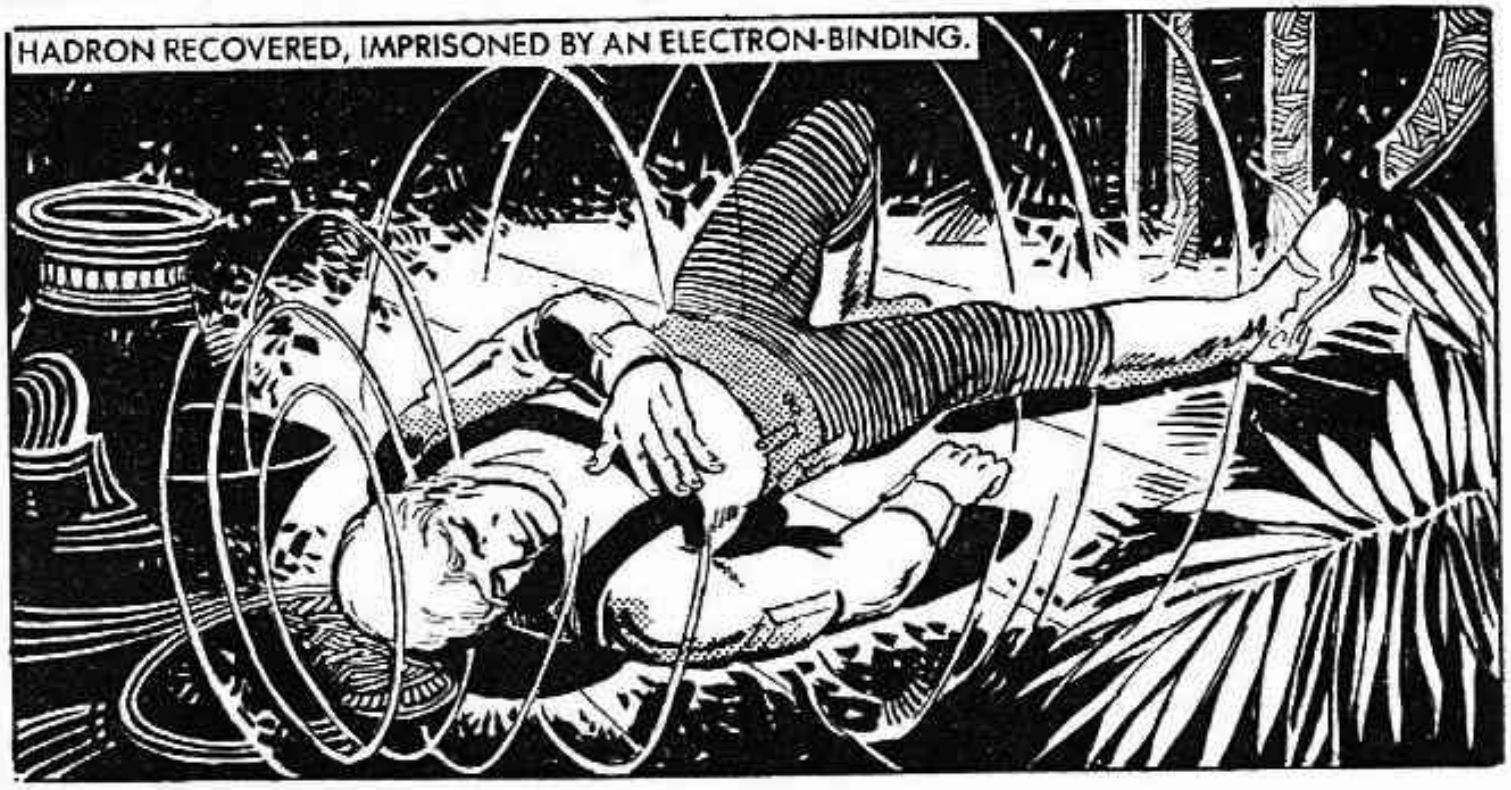
MEANWHILE —
SEE, THERE IS ONE OF THEM.

DEATH TO THE DESPOILERS!

THE SAND-DWELLER LAUNCHED A STRANGE MISSILE —
WHAT'S THIS! I NEVER SAW ANY SAND FLIES BEFORE.
FZZZZ...

THE FLY WAS THE SAND-DWELLERS WEAPON, AND IT EMITTED A HIGH FREQUENCY SIGNAL WHICH CAUSED BLACKOUTS.
FZZZ....
FZZZ...
THAT SOUND . . . RIGHT INSIDE MY HEAD . . . I'M BLACKING OUT . . .

THE SAND-DWELLERS TOOK HADRON TO THEIR UNDERGROUND CITY.


HADRON RECOVERED, IMPRISONED BY AN ELECTRON-BINDING.

WHAT THE . . ?

YOU ARE IN THE PALACE OF OUR CITY FATHER, UNDER THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET YOU WANTONLY RAVAGE AND DESPOIL.
NOT SO FAST . . .

NO MORE TALK! IT IS THE APPOINTED HOUR FOR THE CITY FATHER TO PRONOUNCE SENTENCE.

YOU ARE NOT FROM THIS PLANET. TO BE HERE MEANS DEATH.

THE EXISTENCE OF LIFE ON THIS PLANET DEPENDS UPON A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN ALL THE NATURAL FORCES AND FLUIDS. THE SLIGHTEST DISTURBANCE OF THAT BALANCE BY OUTSIDERS COULD MEAN OUR TOTAL EXTINCTION. THAT IS WHY OUR LAWS ARE ABSOLUTE.

TAKE THE OUTSIDER TO HIS DEATH IN THE DARK POOL!

I CAN'T FAULT THE REASON FOR THEIR LAW. OUR OWN CODE FORBIDS THE DISTURBANCE OF DELICATE ECOLOGIES. I'VE GOT TO FIND SOMEWAY TO ESCAPE AND WARN STARBASE-ONE ABOUT THE HEXOGEN.

THE DARK POOL IS READY TO RECEIVE THE ELEMENTS OF THE OUTSIDER. PUT HIM TO DEATH WITH THE SWORD OF SOLEK.

THE ACRID VAPOUR RISING FROM THE DARK POOL HAD A SMELL WHICH HADRON RECOGNISED INSTANTLY — HEXOGEN!

THE ROCK MUST BE FREE OF ALL METALLIC ELEMENTS OTHERWISE THE HEXOGEN WOULD INSTANTLY DISSOLVE THEM.

MAY THE ELEMENTS OF THE OUTSIDER ENRICH THE VITAL VITRIOL OF OUR WORLD, THAT HIS DEATH BE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE.
WITH THAT BLADE AT MY BACK, ANY ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE IS FUTILE: BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY . . .

SUDDENLY, A SECTION OF ROOF COLLAPSED —
IS THIS PART OF THE CEREMONY, OR WHAT?

OBVIOUSLY THE ROCK FALL WASN'T PLANNED.

HADRON TOOK SHELTER IN AN ALCOVE, BUT THE NATIVE GUARDIAN OF THE DARK POOL BRAVED THE ROCK FALL TO HIT BACK AT THE INTRUSION.
THE ENEMY MUST BE ON THE SURFACE, DRILLING FOR HEXOGEN.
THE DESPOILERS DARE TO ENTER OUR SECRET PLACES!

I MUST STOP THIS INTRUSION.

A FORCE ENCIRCLED THE INTRUSION AND CONDUCTED ITSELF BACK TO THE SOURCE —
— AN OTTODRUZE DRILLING RIG.
ARRRRGH!
INSIDE THE DRILLING RIG —
THE NATIVES OPPOSE US AGAIN! IT IS TIME GRAND-MARSHALL OTTODRUZE CRUSHED THEIR STRENGTH FOR ALL TIME!

THE DRILLING RIG COMMANDER MADE AN IMMEDIATE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION.
PASS THE COMMAND TO PREPARE A TASK FORCE FOR MY PERSONAL LEADERSHIP.

MEANWHILE, UNAWARE OF THE DANGER DEVELOPING ABOVE HIM, HADRON FOUND REFUGE IN A SIDE CHAMBER —
THAT DOOR SHOULD GIVE ME UNINTERRUPTED TIME TO THINK OUT MY NEXT MOVE.

HADRON STUDIED THE MACHINERY IN THE HOPE OF FINDING SOME MEANS TO ESCAPE.
THERE'S SOME AMAZING ENGINEERING HERE. EVERYTHING IS MADE OF SOME SORT OF CERAMIC— IT MUST BE PROOF AGAINST HEXOGEN. THE STUFF GETS PUMPED TO ALL PARTS OF THE CITY FOR USE AS A FUEL, IT SEEMS.
THIS COULD BE USEFUL, A WET-SUIT LIKE THE EXECUTIONER WORE. NO DOUBT PROOF AGAINST HEXOGEN.

THE EVENTS AT THE DARK POOL WERE RELAYED TO THE CITY FATHER.

THE OUTSIDER HAS BEEN LOCATED IN THE PUMP CONTROL ROOM. DO WE RISK DAMAGE TO THE PUMPS BY BREAKING IN?

HE MUST DIE, WHATEVER THE RISK.

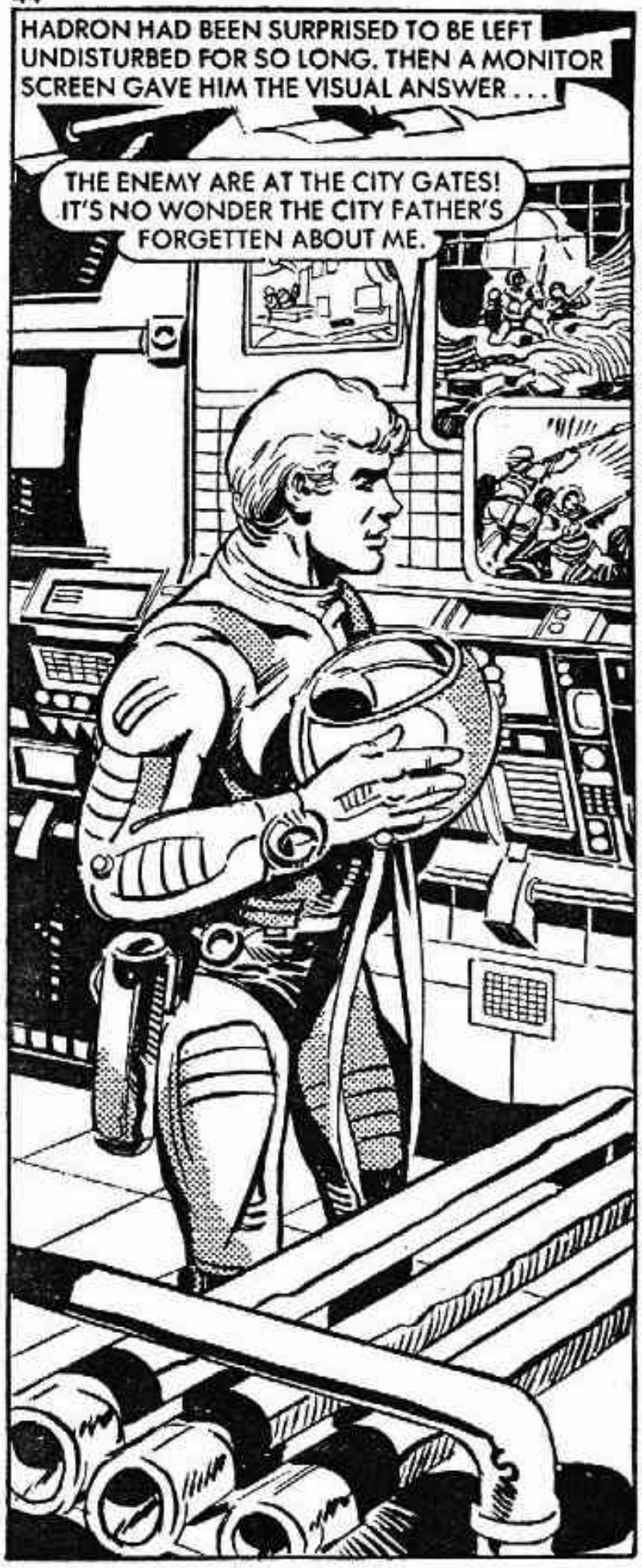
SIRE! THE OUTSIDERS! THEY ARE HERE! AT THE CITY GATES . . . IN GREAT FORCE!

HADRON WAS FORGOTTEN IN THE HURRIED ACTIVITY TO DEFEND THE CITY.
I AM CURSED WITH LIVING IN TROUBLED TIMES! WOULD THAT I COULD ENJOY THE PEACEFUL DAYS OF MY ANCESTORS.

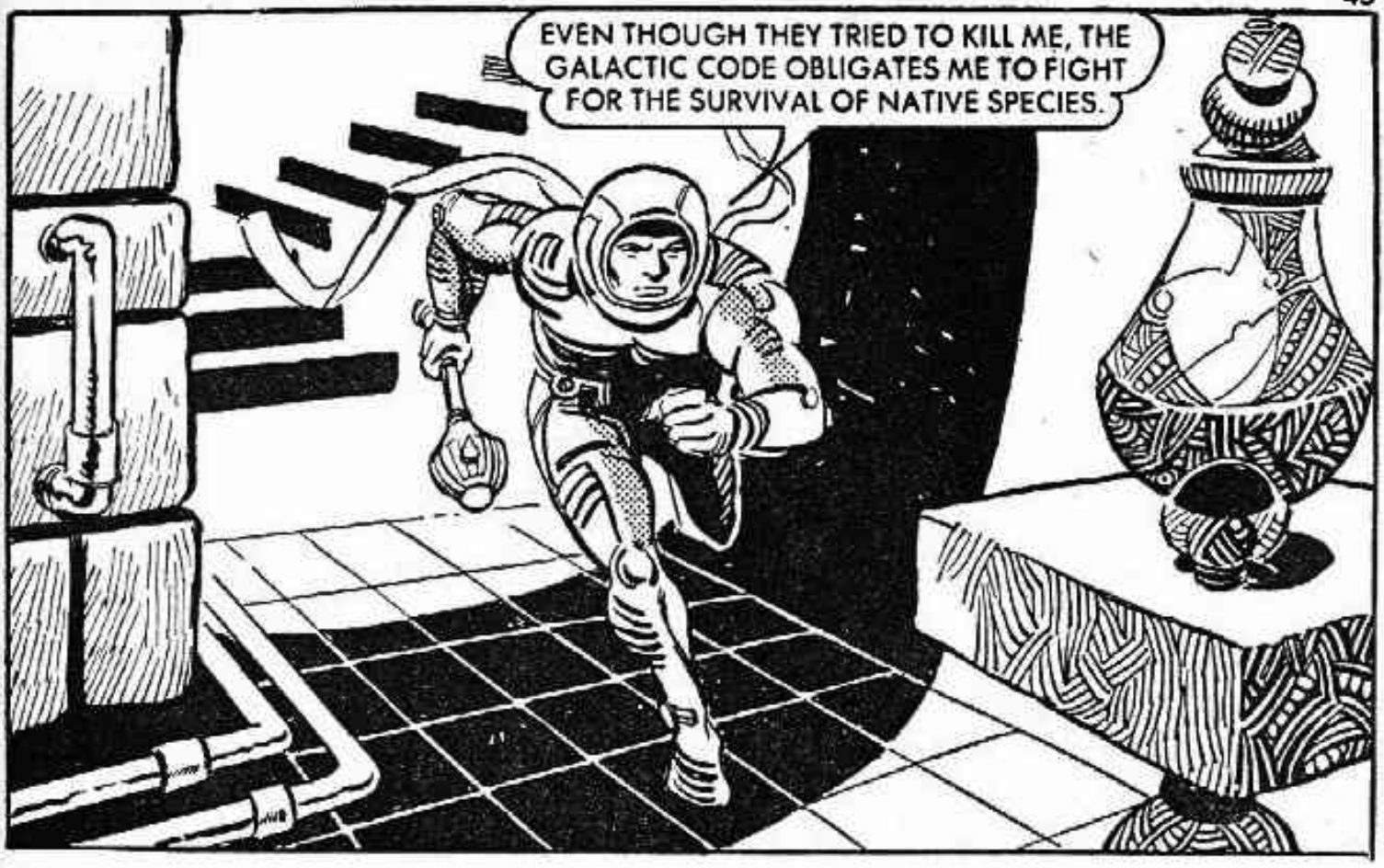
GRAND-MARSHALL OTTODRUZE HAD ASSEMBLED A FORCE WHICH IN HIS JUDGEMENT WOULD LEAVE THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.
FORM UP IN THE RANKS.

THEY HAVE CLOSED THE CITY GATES AGAINST US. IF THEY CHOOSE TO TRAP THEMSELVES LIKE WORMS IN THEIR OWN BURROW, THEN SO BE IT. I HAVE THE RIGHT WEAPON FOR THE SITUATION!

THE GRAND-MARSHALL LAUNCHED A DESTABILISER MISSILE —
THE MISSILE EXPLODED AGAINST THE GATES CAUSING THE STRUCTURE TO VIBRATE AND COLLAPSE.
OUR POSITION HERE IS HOPELESS. REGROUP AT THE PALACE, THEY WILL NOT DARE TO USE EXPLOSIVE UNDERGROUND.


HADRON HAD BEEN SURPRISED TO BE LEFT UNDISTURBED FOR SO LONG. THEN A MONITOR SCREEN GAVE HIM THE VISUAL ANSWER . . .
THE ENEMY ARE AT THE CITY GATES! IT'S NO WONDER THE CITY FATHER'S FORGETTEN ABOUT ME.

I'VE A CHANCE TO HIT THE ENEMY AND, WITH A BIT OF LUCK, FIND A WAY OFF THIS PLANET AND BACK TO STARBASE-ONE.


EVEN THOUGH THEY TRIED TO KILL ME, THE GALACTIC CODE OBLIGATES ME TO FIGHT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF NATIVE SPECIES.

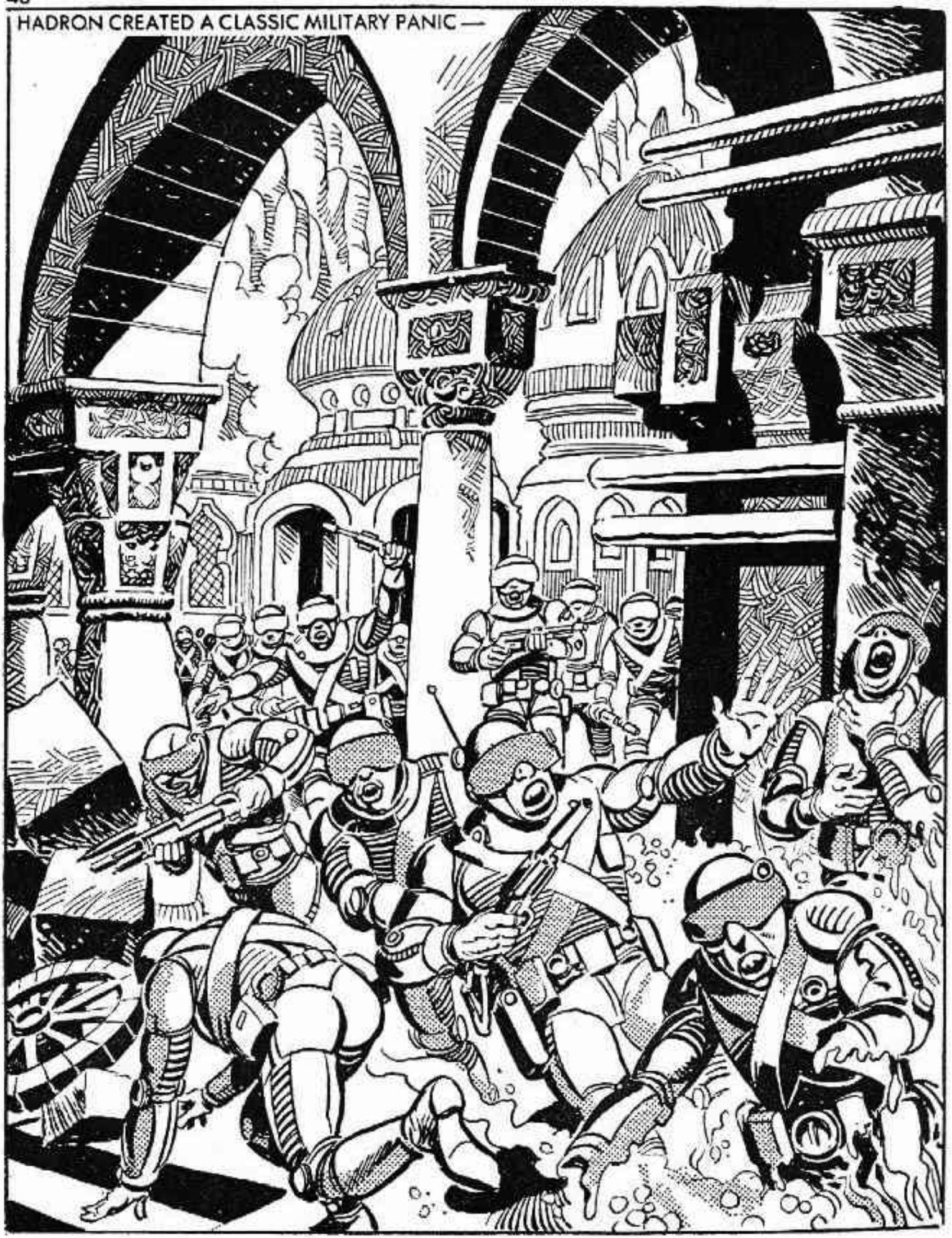
DON'T GO THAT WAY FRIEND, THE ENEMY ARE ONLY SECONDS BEHIND US.
I WON'T SAY THANKS, OR MY VOICE MIGHT GIVE ME AWAY.

WHEN THE NATIVE GUARDS WERE CLEAR, HADRON WENT INTO ACTION AGAINST THE CERAMIC CONDUIT WHICH PIPED HEXOGEN THROUGH THE CITY.
NOW TO RELEASE SOME HEXOGEN!
HERE COME OTTODRUZE'S LOT— THE SLOPE OF THE PASSAGE WILL MAKE THE HEXOGEN FLOW TOWARDS THEM!

HADRON RETREATED —
KILL HIM!

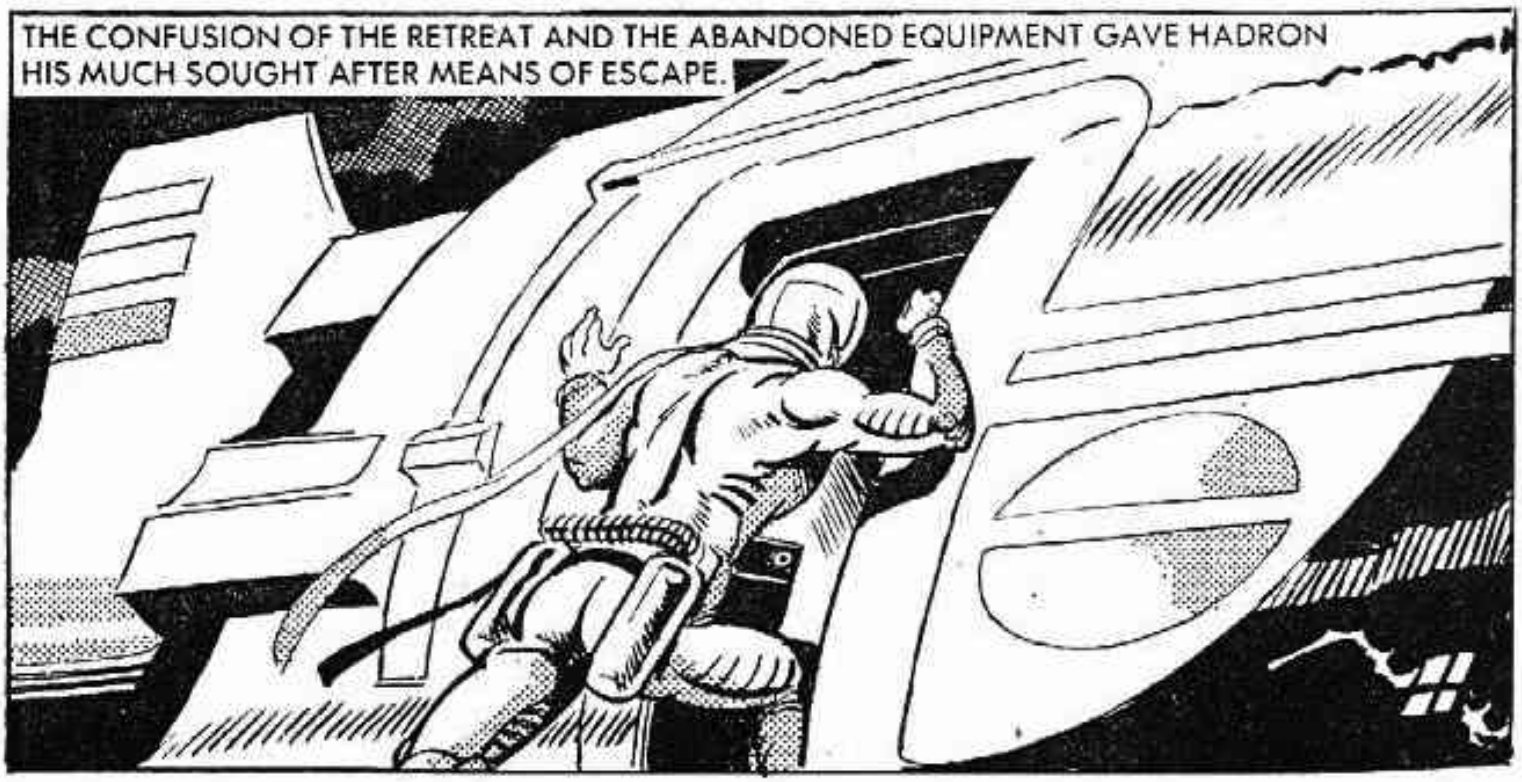
THE HEXOGEN INSTANTLY CORRODED THE OTTODRUZE TROOPERS' ARMOUR.
LET ME OUT OF HERE!

HADRON CREATED A CLASSIC MILITARY PANIC —



WHAT IN SUPERNOVA'S NAME IS GOING ON?
IT'S HEXOGEN, SIR! THE NATIVES ARE USING IT AGAINST OUR MEN!
THE GRAND-MARSHALL'S OPPOSITE NUMBER STUDIED THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH GREAT INTEREST —
SO, WE NOW KNOW THE DESPOILERS WEAKNESS. THEY CAN BE DESTROYED BY THAT WHICH THEY SEEK TO STEAL. I HAVE ENOUGH PROTECTIVE SUITS TO MAINTAIN A GUARD WITH SPRAY GUNS AT THE GATES.

THE GRAND-MARSHALL GAVE THE ORDER WHICH MADE THE RETREAT OFFICIAL, BUT HALF HIS TROOPS AND MOST OF HIS EQUIPMENT WERE DESTROYED BY HEXOGEN.


THE CONFUSION OF THE RETREAT AND THE ABANDONED EQUIPMENT GAVE HADRON HIS MUCH SOUGHT AFTER MEANS OF ESCAPE.

ONCE ON BOARD A RETREATING OTTODRUZE VESSEL—
BY FOLLOWING THE OTHER SHUTTLES I SHOULD FIND THEIR BASE AND SOMETHING WITH HYPER-SPACE CAPABILITY TO GET ME BACK TO STARBASE-ONE.

HADRON WAS RIGHT—
I SHOULD MANAGE TO ENTER THEIR ORBITAL BASE UNDETECTED.

HADRON FOUND A SPACE SUIT IN THE SHUTTLE'S LOCKER AND SPACE WALKED DOWN TO A HIDING PLACE ON THE ASTEROID BASE.
UNDER HERE MUST BE VAST CERAMIC LINED TANKS FOR TRANSPORTING THE HEXOGEN. THE PROTECTIVE SUIT COULD BE USEFUL WHEN I TRY A SPOT OF SABOTAGE.
THE ENEMY HAVE GOT HOLD OF THE SAND-DWELLERS CERAMIC-PUMP TECHNOLOGY, THAT EXPLAINS HOW THEY'RE ABLE TO HANDLE THE STUFF.
ATTENTION ALL RANKS: WE ARE RETURNING URGENTLY TO OUR HOME WORLD TO GET MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR THE WOUNDED. COUNTDOWN IS COMMENCING AT T+500. SECTION LEADERS WILL REPORT WHEN PRE-HYPER-FLIGHT ROUTINES ARE COMPLETE.
I GET IT, THIS WHOLE ASTEROID IS FITTED OUT AS A STARSHIP.

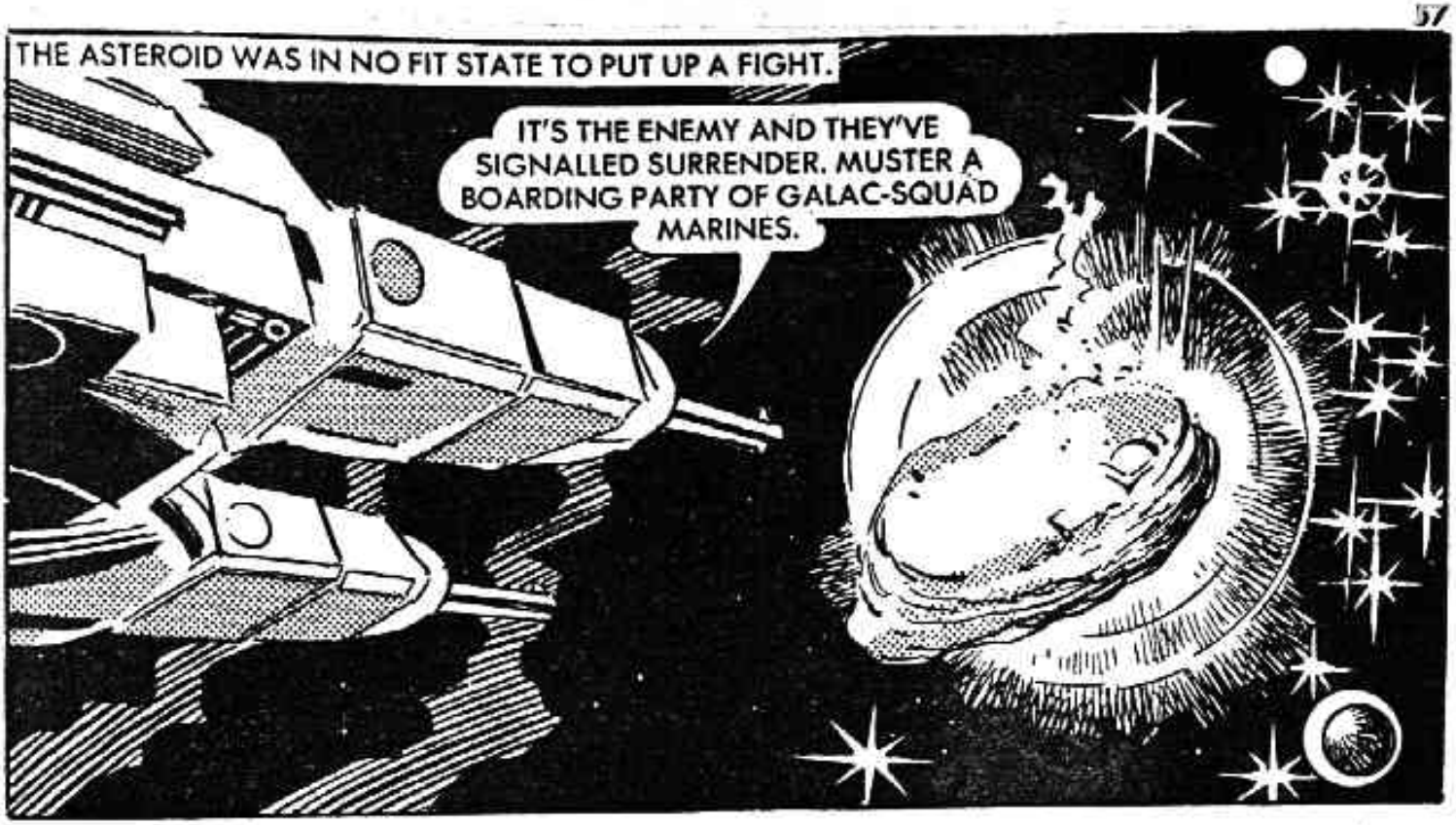
THE ASTEROID ROCK IS HIGHLY METALLIC, IT SHOULD REALLY FIZZ WHEN I START DRAINING THE HEXOGEN STORAGE TANKS.

JUST AS HADRON HAD PREDICTED, THE METALLIC ELEMENTS OF THE ASTEROID REACTED WITH THE HEXOGEN. VEINS OF METALLIC ORES WERE EATEN AWAY TO WEAKEN THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OF THE ROCK.

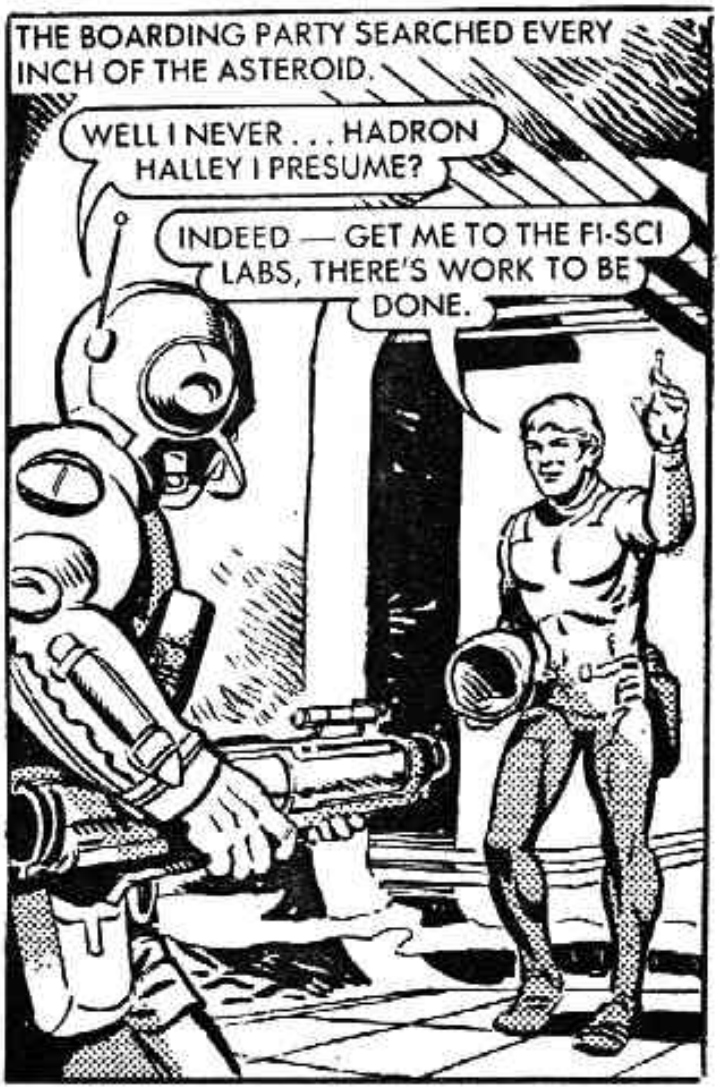
IF HE SPOTS THE HEXOGEN DESTRUCTION FROM HIS SHUTTLE, MY PLAN COULD FAIL.
THE GRAND MARSHALL AND HIS PARTY JETTED OUT, WELL CLEAR OF THE ION BLAST WHICH WOULD ACCOMPANY THE ASTEROID'S LEAP INTO HYPER-SPACE.

WAIT! SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE ASTEROID. WE MUST ABORT THE COUNTDOWN AT ONCE!
THE GRAND MARSHALL'S WARNING WAS SECONDS TOO LATE —
GREAT CHUNKS OF HEXOGEN-WEAKENED ROCK BROKE FREE. WITH THE MASS OF THE ASTEROID SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED, THE THRUSTERS ACHIEVED HYPER-SPACE LEAP AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.
THE CAREFULLY COMPUTED COURSE WAS THROWN INTO CHAOS.
AIIEE! WITH THIS MALFUNCTION WE COULD EMERGE INTO REAL SPACE MANY STAR SYSTEMS AWAY FROM OUR HOME PLANET!

DEEP WITHIN THE DAMAGED SHIP, HADRON RELAXED ON AN ANTI-THRUST COUCH.
ATTENTION! RED ALERT! WE ARE LOST IN HYPER SPACE AND COULD MATERIALISE ANYWHERE IN THE GALAXY!
NOT IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT! WE'LL EMERGE IN THE MIDDLE OF TERRAN FEDERATION SPACE.
HADRON'S CALCULATIONS WERE CORRECT. ON BOARD A TERRAN CRUISER.
ACTION STATIONS! THE SENSOR'S REGISTER THE IMMINENT MATERIALISATION OF AN UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT FROM HYPER-SPACE.

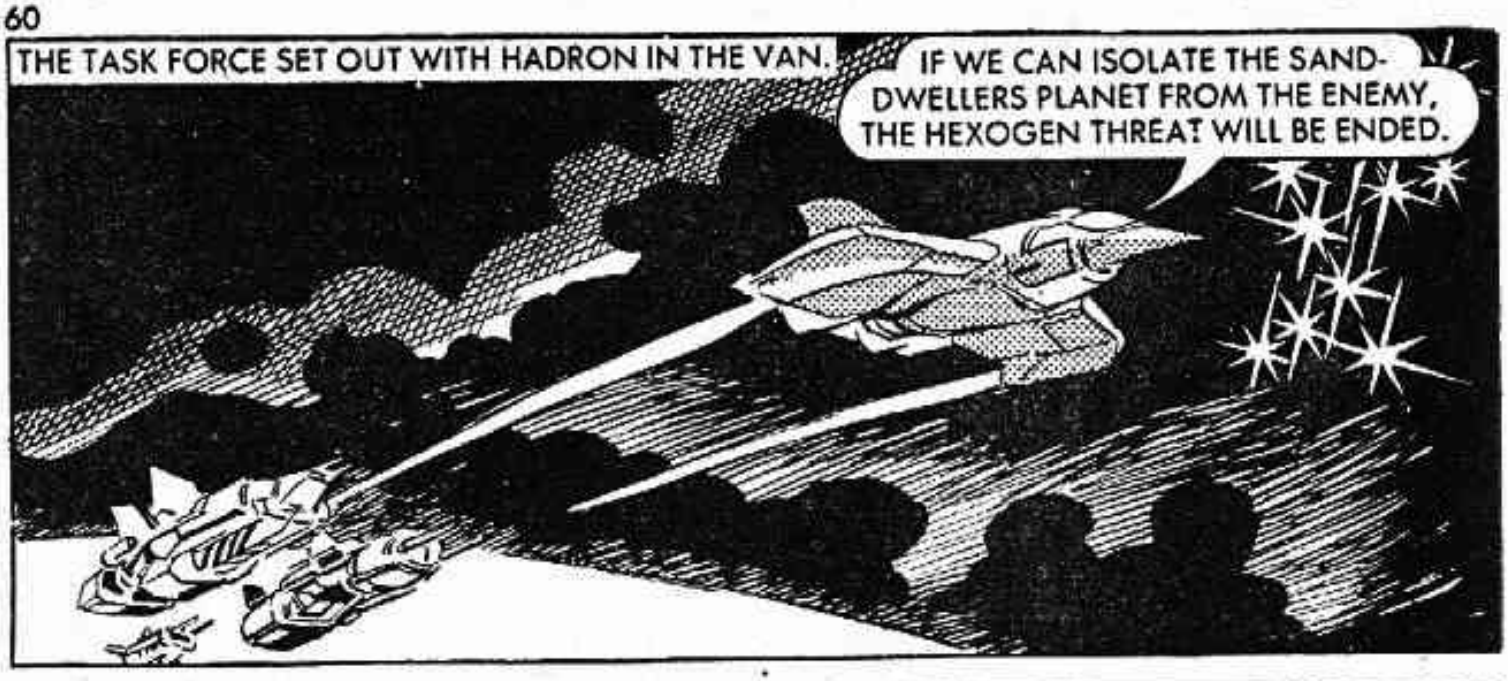

THE ASTEROID WAS IN NO FIT STATE TO PUT UP A FIGHT.
IT'S THE ENEMY AND THEY'VE SIGNALLED SURRENDER. MUSTER A BOARDING PARTY OF GALAC-SQUAD MARINES.

GIVE THE CRAFT A GOOD GOING OVER AND SHOOT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!

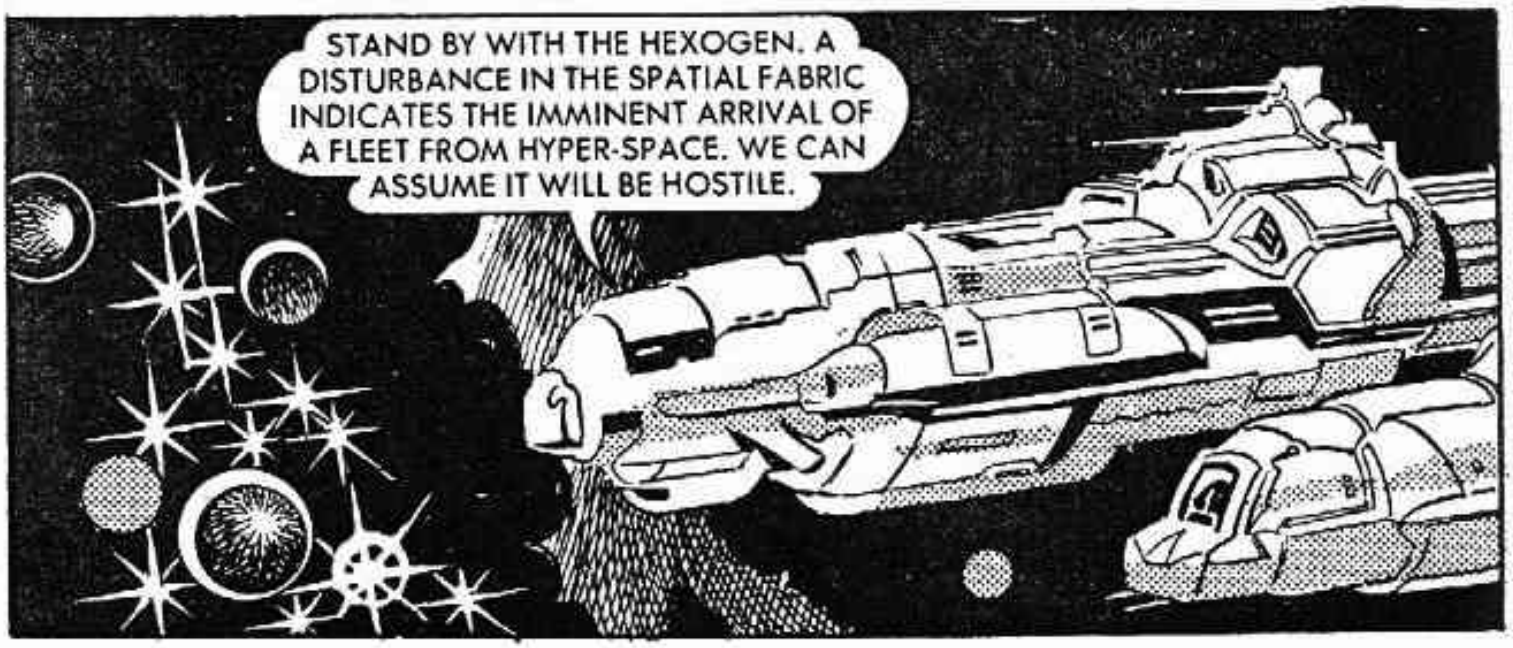

THE BOARDING PARTY SEARCHED EVERY INCH OF THE ASTEROID.
WELL I NEVER . . . HADRON HALLEY I PRESUME?
INDEED — GET ME TO THE FI-SCI LABS, THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE.

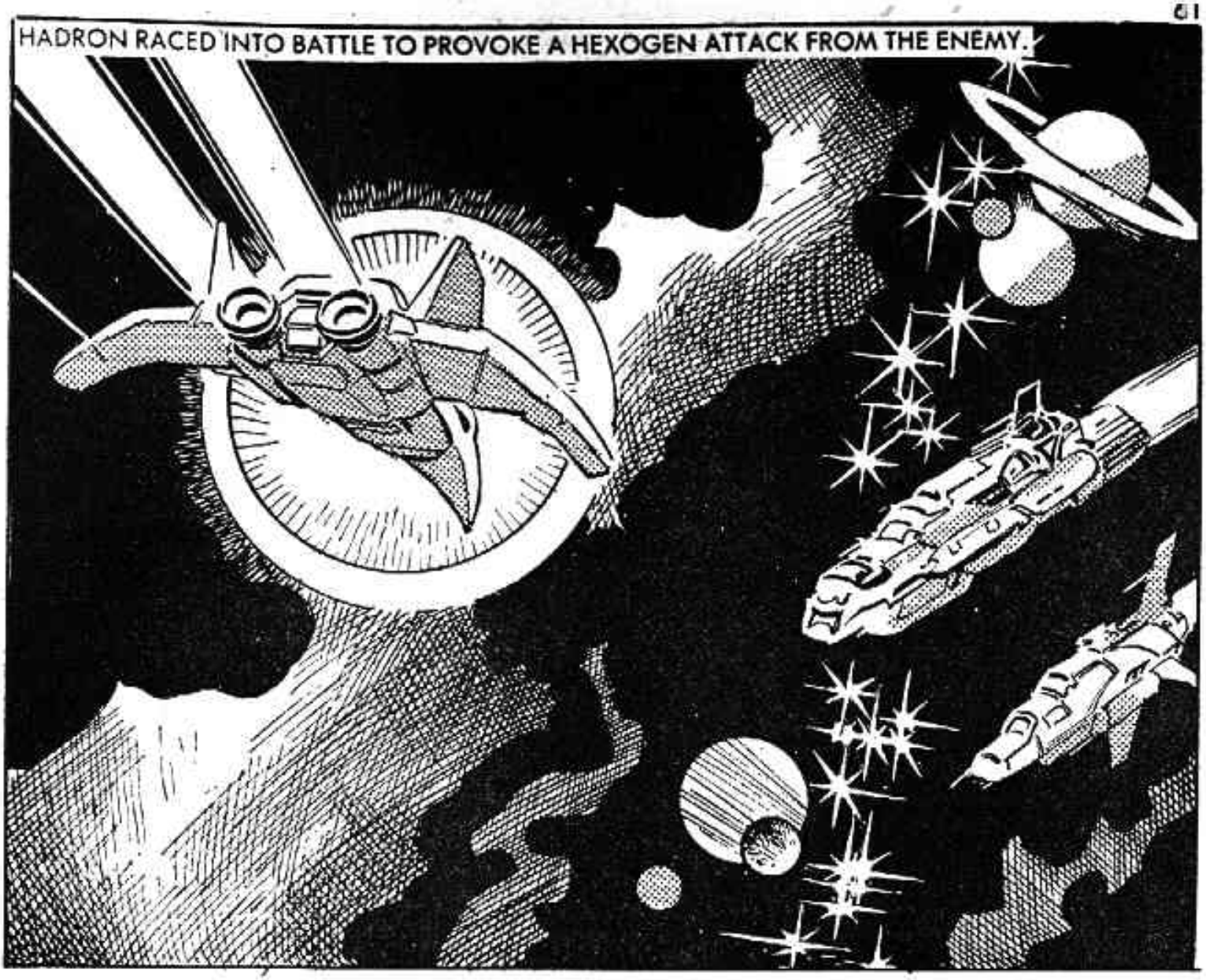
LATER, AT STARBASE-ONE, HADRON ADDRESSED THE INNER WAR-COUNCIL.
GENTLEMEN, AFTER INTENSIVE WORK IN THE FI-SCI LABS, WE HAVE COME UP WITH A DEFENCE AGAINST HEXOGEN FOR OUR SHIPS.

AS YOU KNOW, CERAMICS ARE PROOF AGAINST HEXOGEN BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO USE FOR THE HULL OF STAR-CRUISERS, BECAUSE OF THE VIOLENT STRESSES OF HYPER SPACE FLIGHT.
THE SAND-DWELLERS HAVE PROTECTIVE SUITS. THE SAME MATERIAL CAN BE MANUFACTURED AS A SPRAY-ON COMPOUND WHICH WILL BOND TO OUR SHIPS WITH ENOUGH STRENGTH TO WITHSTAND HYPER-SPACE STRESSES.
THE WORKSHOPS WERE ACTIVE ROUND THE CLOCK PREPARING A SPRAY-PROTECTED TASK FORCE.
WE'VE NO MEANS OF TESTING THE PROTECTIVE SPRAY, SO I'LL GO AHEAD OF THE MAIN BATTLE FLEET — JUST IN CASE.
I KNOW YOU TOO WELL TO TRY AND PERSUADE YOU TO LET SOMEONE ELSE TAKE THE RISK.


THE TASK FORCE SET OUT WITH HADRON IN THE VAN.
IF WE CAN ISOLATE THE SAND-DWELLERS PLANET FROM THE ENEMY, THE HEXOGEN THREAT WILL BE ENDED.

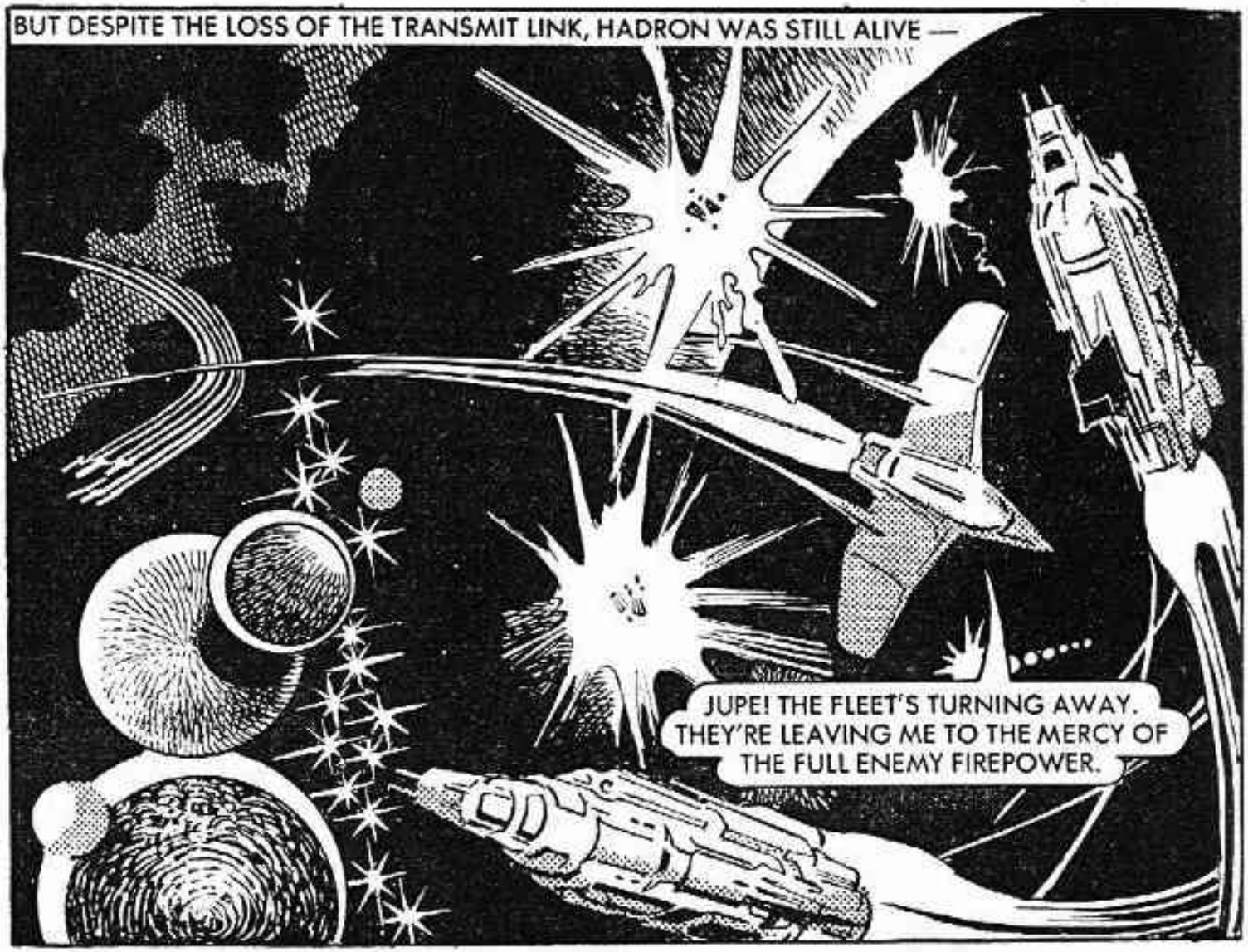
GRAND-MARSHALL OTTODRUZE HAD ALSO BEEN VERY ACTIVE. AS SOON AS HE KNEW THE ASTEROID WAS LOST HE GUESSED THAT GALAC-SQUAD WOULD MOVE AGAINST THE SOURCE PLANET OF HEXOGEN.
ALL SCANNERS ON!


STAND BY WITH THE HEXOGEN. A DISTURBANCE IN THE SPATIAL FABRIC INDICATES THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF A FLEET FROM HYPER-SPACE. WE CAN ASSUME IT WILL BE HOSTILE.


HADRON RACED INTO BATTLE TO PROVOKE A HEXOGEN ATTACK FROM THE ENEMY.

HERE GOES . . .

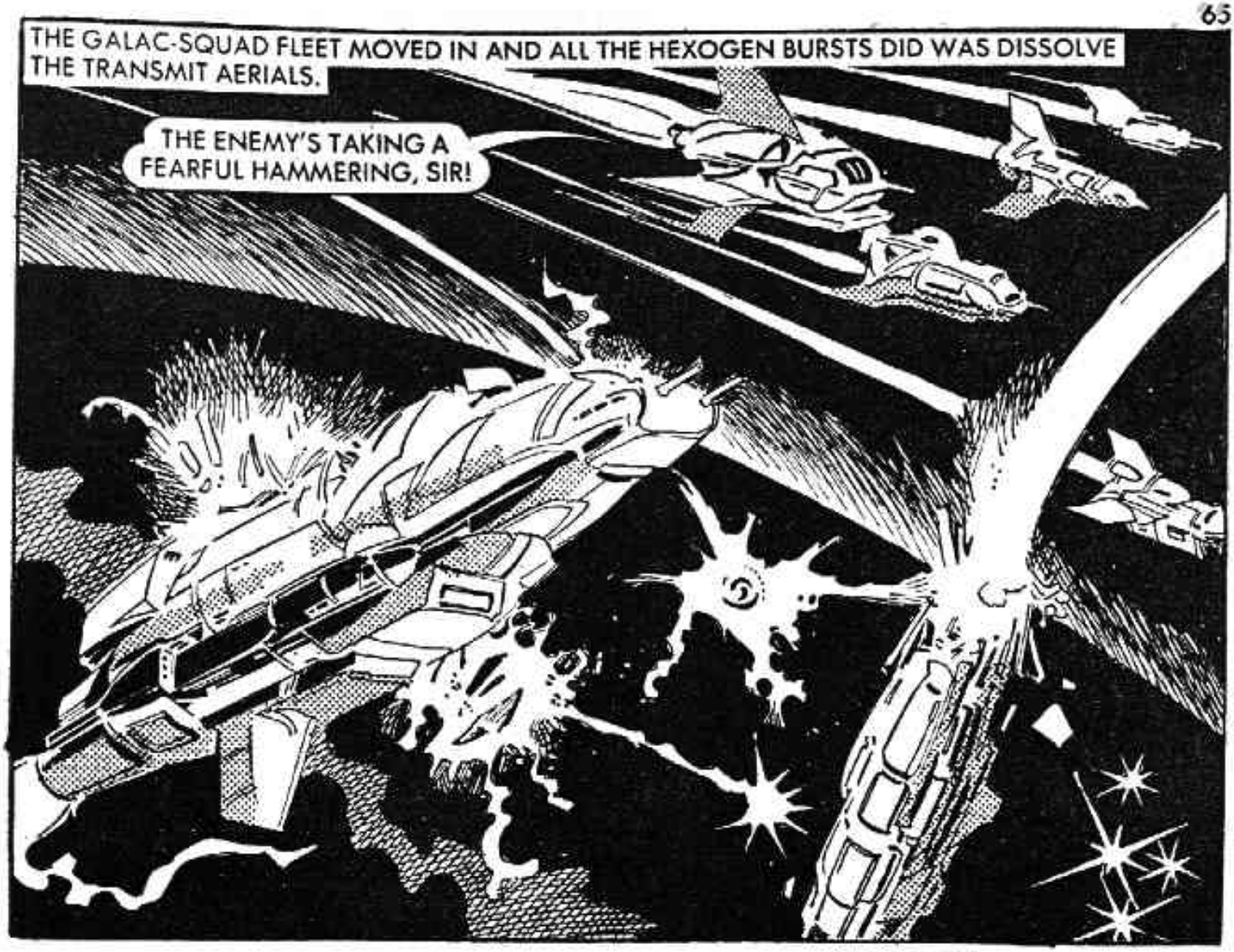
HADRON'S PROGRESS WAS BEING CONSTANTLY MONITORED BY THE GALAC-SQUAD FLEET.
GENERAL LARZ SIR, WE'VE LOST ALL AUDIO CONTACT WITH HADRON HALLEY.
WE MUST ASSUME THE WORST. I WILL SIGNAL THE FLEET TO FIGHT ONLY AT LONG RANGE.


BUT DESPITE THE LOSS OF THE TRANSMIT LINK, HADRON WAS STILL ALIVE —
JUPE! THE FLEET'S TURNING AWAY. THEY'RE LEAVING ME TO THE MERCY OF THE FULL ENEMY FIREPOWER.

OF COURSE! WHAT AN IDIOT I AM! THE TRANSMIT AERIALS COULDN'T BE PROOF SPRAYED AGAINST HEXOGEN. MY MESSAGES AREN'T GETTING THROUGH. I NEED TO GIVE THEM A VISUAL ALL CLEAR.
THIS CRAFT HAS ONLY ONE MISSILE, SO IT WILL HAVE TO COUNT.
HADRON'S MISSILE HIT ITS TARGET —
NOW FOR A BURST OF LASER PULSE CODE.

THE GALAC-SQUAD FLAGSHIP'S LOOK-OUT PICKED UP THE MESSAGE.
THERE'S LASER PULSE ACTIVITY IN THE REGION OF THAT MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION — THE LETTERS SPELL FISCI.

FISCI! FI-SCI! IT'S HADRON! I'LL SIGNAL ALL SHIPS. SET COURSE TOWARDS THE ENEMY.


THE GALAC-SQUAD FLEET MOVED IN AND ALL THE HEXOGEN BURSTS DID WAS DISSOLVE THE TRANSMIT AERIALS.
THE ENEMY'S TAKING A FEARFUL HAMMERING, SIR!

THE WORD SURRENDER WAS NOT IN GRAND MARSHALL OTTODRUZE'S DICTIONARY — HE REFUSED TO SURRENDER AND PERISHED IN A WITHERING HAIL OF FIRE —
THE LEADER IS DEAD, SIR. OTHER CRAFT WANT TO SURRENDER.

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Valentina Vladimirona Tereshkova was the 12th astronaut, but first woman in space. She was 26 when she flew Vostok 6 for 2 days 2 hr. 50 min. starting on June 16, 1963. A year later she married cosmonaut Andrian Nikolyev and a year after that gave birth to the first " space baby " Yelena.